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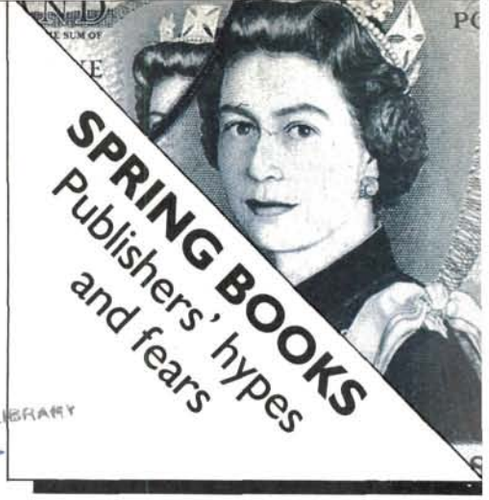

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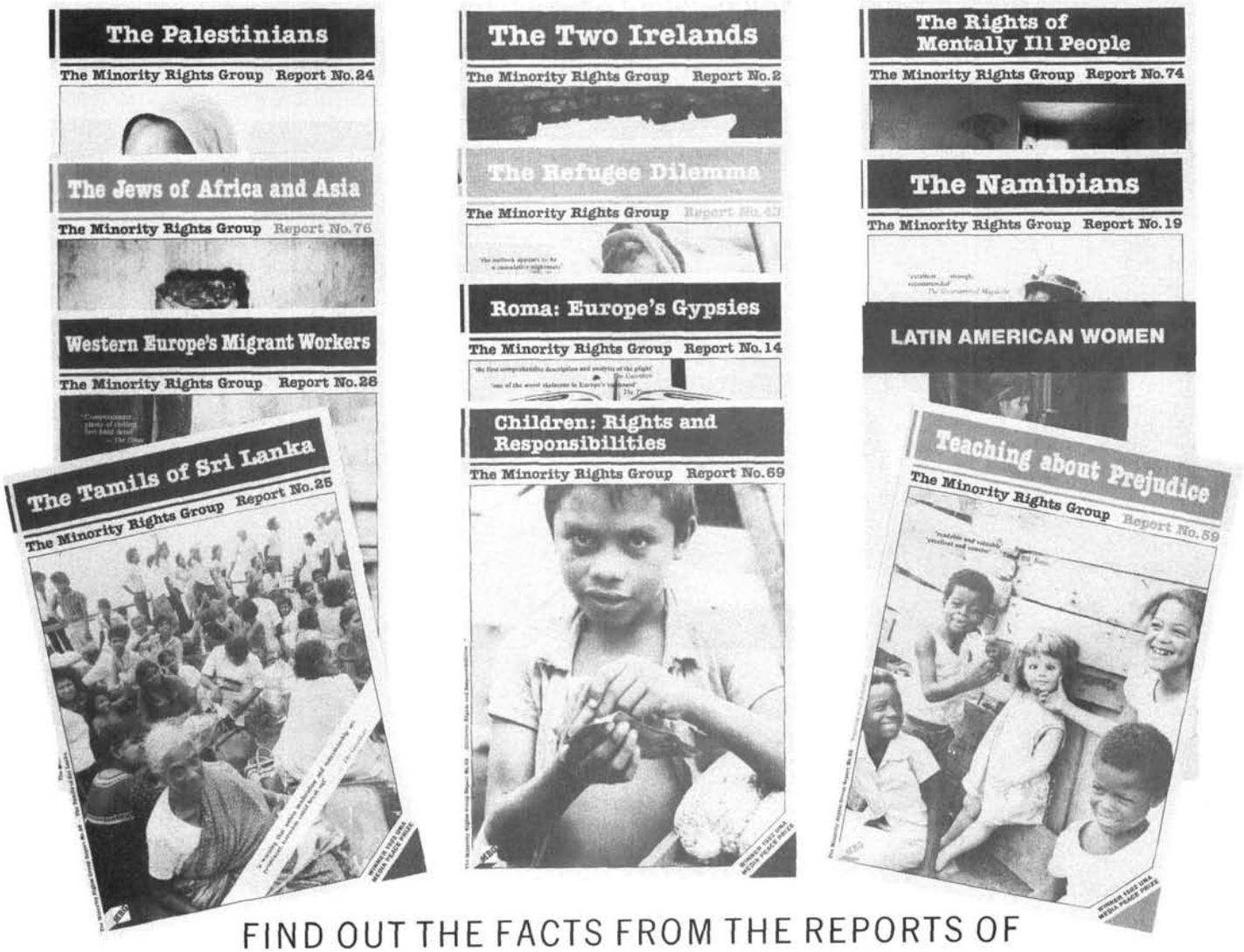
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NEW STATESMAN

Vol 115 No 2974 25 March 1988

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NEXT WEEK

Alexander Cockburn's "View from the West"; *plus* Chris Petit, filmmaker, reviews *Empire of the Sun (left)*

Somebody's son

THE LATE Reginald Maudling once provoked outrage when he described the Tory government's aim in Northern Ireland as achieving "an acceptable level of violence". That's been in essence the aim of all British governments since — though, for reasons of tact, it's nowadays commonplace to talk of achieving "normality". All that's changed is what ranks as "acceptable violence."

The apparently liberal shift in policy which brought about the Anglo-Irish Agreement had no political substance whatever. What HM Government wanted was an extradition treaty and collaboration on security measures and no more. The Irish government's central hope of reform of the Diplock courts (in which British judges sit alone to dispense justice) has been dashed.

Moreover, Jim Prior's period of cautious "Keynesianism across the water" — when relatively small sums of public money were spent on infrastructure, housing and employment initiatives — has been brought to an end. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive — the showpiece of non-sectarian public policy — has suffered a series of damaging cuts. Most important of all, no progress at all has been made on introducing the positive discrimination policies in employment which, as report after report has shown, are desperately needed to overcome the continuing disadvantage which Catholics suffer in the job market; and it has been pressure from the United States, not the British government, which has kept the issue alive.

The government's indifference to the economic and social immiseration of the working-class Catholic community leaves its emphasis on law and order in a dangerous moral isolation, the more so because the RUC, for all the efforts which have been made, is plainly not a non-sectarian force and the quality of British justice inspires confidence only among the Lord Lanes of this world.

It's worth pausing here for a moment to consider less publicised passages of John Stalker's recent book, in which he describes the RUC's frustrated rage at his decision to interview the parents and relatives of the men they had shot dead; such is their hatred of the IRA, leading to a contempt for Catholics in general, that they are hostile to any such official contacts with the minority population. Thus it came about that the first police officers to visit the parents of Michael Tighe, the innocent teenager shot dead in an RUC ambush at a hayshed (*NS* 12 Feb), and to inquire into the circumstances of his killing, came three years later, and from Manchester.

The vast majority of Catholics in Northern Ireland want a peaceful solution to the troubles. Indeed, only a minority are properly described as Republicans. A recent opinion poll shows, for example, that more would prefer to try devolution, with power-sharing, than seek the unification of Ireland.

Their trust can be won, even among the indignities of British rule in Northern Ireland. But it has to be won — and kept. The same poll, jointly published by Ulster TV and *fortnight* magazine, shows that Enniskillen did in fact harm the standing of Sinn Fein among the Catholic community. Some one in five Catholics said that they had afterwards withdrawn or reduced their support for Sinn Fein; but as many again said that Sinn Fein had gained or regained their support as a result of the Stalker affair and the Court of Appeal decision on the Birmingham Six.

The clamour of condemnation over the deaths of the two British soliders last weekend will win no propaganda victories; the Irish are well aware that self-righteousness has long been the British way of burying their sense of responsibility for such terrible events. We have to understand, first, what the relationship between the Catholic community and Sinn Fein really stands for. Sinn Fein is not representative of that community but it's not entirely unrepresentative either. Funerals in West Belfast are political occasions and the large turnout for the funerals of the Gibraltar terrorists represented the direct political expression of that community's view of the propriety of shooting down unarmed people in the street.

The British media and politicians have condemned the priest who preached that such conduct had no place in a Christian society, while praising the humanity of the priest who grieved over the body of one of the two soldiers — "somebody's son". Both, in fact, have spoken for civilised values, which government ministers, with their terminological inexactitudes in the cause of disinformation, failed to do.

As Ben Pimlott writes on page 9, any true policy of reconciliation in Northern Ireland must be founded on social justice. But the British government must also adopt an unbending moral insistence that law and justice will be administered in accordance with the highest principles; and that Irish Catholics will not be treated as second-class citizens. Only when they are truly citizens in their own country, whatever the constitutional arrangements are, can there be peace in Northern Ireland. □

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DIARY

Talking to a class of 16-year-olds in the West Country last week, I found myself hesitating before reading out a headline which included the word "gay".

The next day I bumped into an old friend who is both a teacher and a homosexual. From June, when the infamous Clause 28 becomes law, it will be a criminal offence for him to "intentionally promote homosexuality". The vagueness of the phrase renders it all the more menacing. Simply by being himself, it could be argued, my friend is "promoting" homosexuality: he is rather a good advertisement for it, if one must look at it thus. The addition of the word "intentionally"is no help at all: a British court is unlikely to allow much generosity or sympathy in assessing a homosexual's "intentions". I asked a man from the gay magazine *Pink Paper* what advice he could offer teachers now. "I would say emigrate," he replied.

○

The man responsible for Clause 28 is David Wilshire, the 44-year-old Tory MP for Spelthorne. He is a perfect example of the creepy suburban zealots who clutter the Tory backbenches these days. He was elected to the Commons only nine months ago. It is no surprise to learn that he lives in Staines.

This week I asked him if he felt no shame or regret at the misery his clause was bound to bring. "No regrets whatsoever," the Voice of the Suburbs chirped briskly. "I'm totally unapologetic about introducing it. It makes it clear that enough is enough. I've likened it to lancing a boil."

Wilshire babbled earnestly on about the danger of making homosexuality "something people might want to copy". I said, jokingly, that he made it sound contagious. "There's no evidence that it isn't," he replied with the utmost seriousness. "Until you can demonstrate that that isn't so, we mustn't take any chances." Homosexuality, he believes, "can be caught" like a disease. This half-wit's own education (at Kingswood School, Bath) was clearly deficient in sex.

But he wouldn't want us to think he's anti-gay. Why, he's had letters from homosexuals supporting Clause 28! And if he hadn't acted now, in a few years "there would have been an explosion, a backlash by the public, who might have wanted much stronger measures taken". He thinks he's done gays a favour. Some of his best friends are homosexual, no doubt? "I wouldn't have the impertinence to go round asking people," he snorted. "I don't go around boasting that I'm a stamp collector [eh?] and I don't go rushing round saying 'Guess what, I'm a heterosexual!'" I should say that's just what he has been doing.

○

My recent comments on Israel's thuggery in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were not to the liking of a reader in Golders Green. He has written to tell me so. "I have no dout you are just one of those typical ignorent envious stupid yaho's that you will find in any pub leaning over the counter thinking you are special just because the Pub Manager gives you a smile . . . after you have licked His bum of course." Sic, sic, sic.

My correspondent describes himself as a wealthy man who goes to Israel on holiday twice a year and leads "a very enjoyable life". He informs me that "the Israilis or Jews whatever you like to call us" will take no notice of "you nateful jealous Gentiles telling us to treat the wild half uncivalised beastley Arabs with kid gloves". His own solution is to "drive them all out of the Gaza strip into Syria, Lebanon or somewhere but we won't waste valuable ammunition and time messing arround with them that's for sure". Meaning what? "We will use the Atom Bomb if it comes to it." All most civilised. Or civalised, according to taste.

○

Sir Eldon Griffiths MP, as I mentioned a couple of weeks ago, has complained about my suggestion that USAF bases over here are not entirely pure in thought and deed. I have just found another little morsel which he might care to chew on. To quote from that admirable newspaper *The Stars and Stripes:* "Many American airmen stationed in Britain have known for some time that a nickel works like a 20-pence coin in pay phones. A 20-pence coin is worth 37 cents, so every nickel used for a call saved 32 cents. For someone using nickels, a transatlantic call that should cost $24 would cost $3.25." British Telecom estimates that the fraud cost it $52,000 in the past few months. I hope Griffiths, the Hon Member for Plod Central, is suitably shocked.

○

Of all the crimes that people commit, however, I suppose defrauding British Telecom is the least objectionable. I can't for the moment think of a single moral argument against it. Last year I reported here that a friend's daughter, living on her own in London, had asked BT for a phone in her flat. That great corporation (current risible slogan: "It's you we answer to") had replied that it couldn't even think about the matter until March 1988.

Well, March 1988 is upon us. And BT has pondered. It has told the young woman that she can't have a telephone until September at the earliest — almost a year after her application. The excuse is that lines in the area are "overloaded" and BT is waiting for new switching equipment to arrive from Canada.

But mark the sequel. Some of the woman's friends in the area, who have been fobbed off in the same way, have now decided to apply as "businesses" rather than "domestic consumers". And guess what? New telephone lines served up and connected pronto, with no nonsense about Canadian switching equipment or overloaded lines. The woman herself is now trying to pull the same trick, and it seems to be working. The catch, of course, is that she has to pay a connection charge of £115 (compared with £105 for a domestic line) and the quarterly rental fee is £22.55 (private individuals pay £13.95). So BT makes even more dosh to add to the great piles of the stuff clogging up its basement. BT's profit last year, incidentally, was £2.1 billion. Its chairman, Iain Vallance, is paid a salary of £180,000 plus share options galore. Please give generously.

○

"Kenneth Baker's *English History in Verse,* to be published by Faber next month, provokes the thought that we have surely not had so widely read a Minister of Education since H.A.L. Fisher in the 1920s," the *Sunday Telegraph* suggested last weekend. The remark is, I think, an unconscious attempt to deny David Hockney's recent charge that this government is the most philistine in living memory. But it won't work. One can read books and still be a philistine: even the penis-brained Cecil Parkinson gives "reading" as his recreation in *Who's Who.*

And the charmless Nicholas Ridley paints pictures. A national newspaper once cut a sentence I had written pointing out that Ridley would be happy to see the English countryside concreted over. "Nick Ridley's a good friend of mine and it's very unfair to say he doesn't care about the landscape," the deputy editor said, explaining the censorship. "He's a painter, you know." So, come to think of it, was Hitler.

Francis Wheen

ROGER WODDIS

I remember Cagney

"The US ambassador in Tegucigalpa was ordered to call on the Honduran president and ask him for US reinforcements. And this he did, helpfully putting the previous day's date on the letter" — Observer

I remember Cagney,
  Bogie and Edward G.,
Selling the weak protection,
  Keeping the market free.
Where are they now? The gangsters
  Who once saw their names in lights?
Leaning on pliant clients,
  Talking of human rights.

Somebody thinks Honduras
  Makes a swell base for war.
Somebody needs a letter,
  Dated the day before.
President Hoyo one morning
  Remembered the pact he made:
He can expect a visit,
  If he won't ask for aid.

Once it was just the movies,
  Now it is played for real,
Shultz against Sandinistas,
  Who've never known how to kneel.
I remember the gangsters,
  Who lowered the social tone.
Now they are loveable leaders —
  Let's hear it for Ron Capone!

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Hungarian reform groups blossom

BARELY suppressed excitement creeps into the voices of Hungarian intellectuals speaking of their embryonic trade union. In the wake of the biggest — and most expressly political — demonstration in Hungary since the '50s last Tuesday, meetings this week and next are expected to decide whether the union will be wholly independent: offical trade union leaders are straining to negotiate a deal to bring it into their fold.

Lecturers from more than 45 different universities and colleges have already committed themselves to the project and even natural scientists, traditionally less politicised, are adding their weight to the call for better pay, better resources and more freedom of expression.

In earlier discussions it was resolved the union should throw open its doors to anyone working in places of education, although according to one lecturer, Ferenc Miszlivetz, the take-up amongst blue-collar workers has been slow. "But we're hoping this will inspire others to form their own unions", he said. They are hoping to establish the right to have more than one trade union operating in any place of work, and for workers to be members of both official and unofficial unions, added a colleague, Ferenc Koszeg.

There is clearly a rolling momentum of pressure for change: an independent youth group is soon to be launched. And an appeal is circulating amongst Greens — including the Danube Circle and the 'Blues', groups formed to save the Danube from its current intense pollution — historians, independent peace groups and others calling for the formation of a Network of Free Initiatives. "An umbrella which can co-ordinate but won't direct from above", says Miszlivetz. "The government is constantly saying it wants dialogue: we are providing a partner for it to dialogue with."

Nasty cracks are starting to appear in Hungary's image as the most liberal and prosperous of the Eastern European nations following the 1968 reforms. The structure of industry has barely changed; the country is deeply in credit and cultural life still ossified. "The government will have to soon start coming up with the reforms it has said it made years ago."

As usual, the government and its critics are playing an intricate dance: at any moment the tune can change and one partner miss their step. In an attempt to siphon off the head of steam for reform General Secretary János Kádár has given the go-ahead for the official peace council to make approaches — including talks on alternatives to civil service for conscientious objectors — to independent peace groups and it looks like even trade union and youth movements will be tolerated — within limits.

Most of those working for reform are sensitive to the limits: the youth group, said one organiser, will expressly *not* be anti-communist and will call itself something along the lines of the "Democratic Youth Socialist Organisation". And despite house searches, the arrest of eight supporters and beating of one leading intellectual, Miklos Haraszti, last week's demonstration was good tempered, with traditional Hungarian folk songs mingling with the calls for democracy and freedom of assembly.

Does so much activity signal a new feeling of optimism? "Strangely, it seems that after utter hopelessness comes hope: some of us are moving into that stage, but many others are still trapped in bitterness and hopelessness," according to Miszlivetz. One worrying sign of this is the search for scapegoats: anti-gypsy feeling and anti-semitism is on the increase.

Jane Dibblin

Secret plans for new chemical weapons

A SECRET West German request for the US to produce new chemical weapons — as yet hidden from the Bundestag — has been revealed by one of Mrs Thatcher's ministers. The disclosure comes at a time when Congress and lobbyists are gearing up for a battle over the US building its first-ever chemical missiles.

Progress at the Geneva talks on a complete ban on chemical weapons had defused public opposition. This was especially important for Germany, where Chancellor Kohl faces important regional elections this spring and is even more vulnerable to electoral angst over chemicals than he is on the nuclear issue.

However, last year's US decision to begin production of new chemical shells for artillery guns prompted such concern in Bonn that the public were given to understand both that all the old stocks in Germany would be withdrawn, and that no decision had been taken to replace them with new weapons.

Now a new controversy is breaking out over a statement from George Younger. In defence question time, Younger had been pressed on the possibility of a chemical missile by Simon Hughes. In the ensuing exchange, he told Denzil Davies that the US production is in response to a request from NATO. As all NATO decisions are reached by consensus, Younger thus let slip the German government's agreement to ask the US to carry out this production before the Bundestag had been told.

On the issue of basing new weapons in Germany, Younger managed to contradict himself within minutes. Initially, he explained that the US had no intention of deploying new weapons in peacetime, but moments later as Denzil Davies asked about US chemical stocks in Germany he disclosed: "I understand that they intend to phase them out as they are becoming aged and to replace them with new binary weapons which NATO decided to ask the United States to produce." (Official Report, 26 January 1988).

Two entirely new types of missiles will be added to the shells and the bizarrely named "big-eye" bomb already underway. According to brief statements before otherwise secret Congressional hearings earlier this month, the US is for the first time building chemical missiles. The first of these is for the same mobile rocket launcher that NATO plans to equip with nuclear weapons. Congress is being asked for $60m this year to prepare for production in the early 1990s. This would give chemical capability to the 681 launchers the US is building, more than 300 of which are in Europe. The missiles will have a range of at least 20 miles and possibly up to 150 miles, as the launchers can carry several types of missiles. In addition the US is starting work on chemical weapons for air-launched cruise missiles. These so-called "standoff" missiles are an entirely new type of supposed super-accurate weapon.

US lobbyists against chemical weapons see little chance of stopping this new generation of weapons without clear evidence from European leaders that they are not wanted — and even then, the US may produce them hoping to find an overseas home at a later date.

However, for several years during the height of Reagan's authority the House of Representatives refused production funds for the artillery shells and is still holding up the "big-eye" bomb (mainly because it doesn't work). A coalition of groups active at the grassroots and in Washington prevented production in a series of tight votes. In the end the military had their way in a trade-off typical of Capitol Hill. After the usual months of discussion on the Defence Budget, leaders from the House and the Senate came together to seek a compromise. In this case the House forced the Senate to agree to a ban on anti-satellite testing in space — thus slowing down Star Wars — but in return the Senate pushed through chemical production.

Already at loggerheads over atoms and agriculture, Mrs Thatcher and Chancellor Kohl face a new conflict over Younger's disclosure, expected to come to a head at the meeting of NATO Defence Ministers in Denmark next month. But as with the nuclear "modernisation" programme, NATO has created a pointless crisis. Once again weapons that are militarily irrelevant and diplomatically destabilising are produced following secret decisions which subvert the democracy they are supposed to defend.

Dan Plesch

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A-bomb tests triggered Aids?

RADIOACTIVITY from nuclear weapons tests could have been partly responsible for starting the Aids epidemic, according to American professor of radiology from Pittsburgh University, Ernest J. Sternglass.

His theory, which is not supported by either independent or government scientists in Britain, is that strontium 90 from the atmospheric bomb tests in the 1950s and 1960s could have been absorbed by mothers in Central Africa and North America and damaged their children's immune systems. He quotes evidence which suggests that weapons fallout could have mutated an Aids-related virus in humans or animals.

A paper co-authored by Sternglass and Dr J Scheer, a physicist from the German University of Bremen, was circulated at the "First Global Radiation Victims Conference" in New York last autumn. It argues that the places where AIDS is thought to have originated coincide with areas of high rainfall which would have deposited relatively large amounts of strontium 90 and other isotopes from weapons testing. A 1957 United Nations survey of strontium in young people in Africa found the highest concentrations in the Belgian Congo.

Strontium 90, when ingested into the body, concentrates in the bone (hence it is known as a "bone-seeker") and irradiates bone marrow cells. Sternglass claims that even at very low levels it can inflict enough damage to weaken the body's vital system of natural immunity to diseases. This leads him to conclude that it may have triggered off the spread of AIDS.

Prominent independent experts in this country regard his hypothesis as interesting but highly speculative. Professor George Knox from the Department of Social Medicine at Birmingham University said this week that there were plenty of other conceivable explanations for the origins of Aids. His colleague in the same department, the highly respected epidemiologist Dr Alice Stewart, doubted whether the amounts of stontium 90 from bomb test fallout would be enough to harm bone marrow cells.

When the issue was raised in the House of Commons last week by the Plaid Cymru MP, Dafydd Elis Thomas, he was told that when health officials had received a copy of Sternglass's paper they would "consider whether it warrants evaluation". Earlier, the Government's response had been rather more dismissive. "Speculative suggestions of this nature," junior health minister Lord Skelmersdale told the House of Lords on 10 March, "are not worth following up."

Rob Edwards

Raymond Williams memorial

THERE is to be a memorial meeting for Raymond Williams at the Conway Hall in London at 7pm this Saturday. Among the speakers and readers will be Anthony Barnett, Terry Eagleton, Stuart Hall, Heather Glenn, Cora Kaplan, Francis Mulhern, Sheila Rowbotham, Caroline Steedman and Jenny Taylor. The New Statesman *is one of the sponsors of the meeting which is organised by the Socialist Society, of which Raymond Williams was an active member.* ●

'Nobody's baby'

IF YOU publish a report the day after the Budget, don't expect it to get much coverage. Yet the government did — and it didn't. The report in question is an important one, *Community Care: An Agenda for Action*. Its author is Sir Roy Griffiths. There was no proper press release, no press conference and no Sir Roy, for he was convalescing after an operation. The report was simply placed in the House of Commons Library, a sure sign of official stand-offishness. A strange way to treat a friend of the Administration and Mrs Thatcher's NHS adviser.

So what's going on? At one level the explanation seems straightforward. Sir Roy has bucked the trend and ignored the fact that local government is not the flavour of the decade. Surveying the confused world of care in the community, he quickly found no one with overall responsibility — "a feeling that community care is a poor relation; everybody's distant relative but nobody's baby".

So, at the centre, he recommends a Minister for Community Care and, at local level, here is the heresy: "I firmly believe that the major responsibility for community care rests best where it now lies: with local government. Elected local authorities are best placed, in my judgment, to assess local needs, set local priorities, and monitor local performance".

The background to the current controversy is a significantly ageing population — the number of over 85s will double between 1981 and the year 2001, from half a million to over a million. Together with the closure of large-scale institutions for people who are mentally ill or suffer from handicaps, this social question is fast becoming one of increasing public and political concern.

For years now, the DHSS has sought to convince that government itself has minor duties — "care *in* the community must increasingly mean care *by* the community", stated its White Paper of 1981, *Growing Older*. Since then the debate has hotted up, needs and stresses have become more apparent. With an estimated million or more home carers, usually women, representing the reality, as opposed to the rhetoric, of community care, existing social provisions have come under sustained criticism.

Policy is cracking at the seams. Yorkshire Television's *The Granny Business* exposed the abuses inherent in the private residential home system — a burgeoning and profitable industry, fed by social security payments that have grown from just £10 million in 1979 to £459 million in 1986. And late in 1986, the Audit Commission produced a devastating critique of the state of community care. The government had to do something: enter Sir Roy.

But Sir Roy has produced an independent report: community care needs should form a separate part of the public expenditure planning process, with new financial arrangements between central and local government, he says. This would require the DHSS settng out the financial implications of its policies, and accepting a major responsibility for meeting them.

In other words, he has much to say about social intervention and public expenditure. Exit Sir Roy, cancel the launch party.

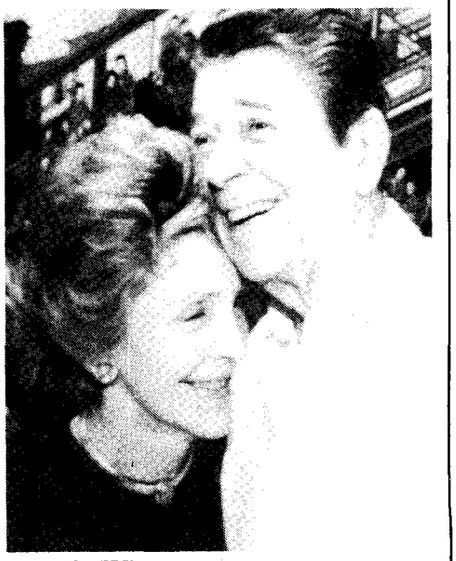
Malcolm Wicks

Malcolm Wicks is the author of "A Future for All: do we need a welfare state?" published by Penguin.

If the caption fits

No: 60

Spring is in the air, and fashion designers have stopped doing what it is they do during the dark cold winter months, and brought us yet more dazzling collections of clothes no one in their right mind would wear, or even crawl into. What are the the two models (wearing Junko Kashino no less) thinking/saying to each other as they slither up the catwalk? Tell us on a postcard please by Monday 4 April. Ten-pound book token to the winner.



No 58: Winner

Ron: "Do you remember that first night when you smelt my armpit, Nancy?" (*Brian Ruth, London.*)

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Open season on abortion

AS ALTON's Bill was sliding past second reading, the Canadian Supreme Court was declaring its country's rigid abortion law unconstitutional. Since then (and until Conservative PM Brian Mulroney works up the courage to introduce new legislation) there has been open season for abortion in Canada. Every woman now has unlimited right to access provided she can find a doctor to perform the operation. The catch is that unless she lives in a city in the centre of the country, she is probably out of luck.

Ironically, the impetus behind the January court ruling was to adjust the unequal access to abortion perpetuated by the *old law*. The law required that a woman's request for an abortion meet the approval of a hospital committee. Several regions of the country — because they are either too rural or are located in anti-abortion strongholds — have no such committees. The law then, forced many woman to spend time and money travelling elsewhere (often to the US) to have illegal abortions, and to bear children against their will.

Access problems have intensified since the ruling because the provinces and not the federal government administer the public Health Care Services. Many provincial Premiers have taken advantage of the current lawless situation to impose their own abortion policies on their female citizens.

While the central provinces have disbanded their hospital committees, other provinces have implemented programmes that are suspiciously similar to, or more rigid than, the old, outlawed system. The eastern province of Prince Edward Island, where no abortions have been performed since 1986 because of anti-abortion pressure, is still refusing to allow abortions in the province, but will pay for women to go elsewhere.

The greatest uproar has been created by British Columbia's Premier Bill Vander Zalm, who initially refused to pay for any abortions unless the woman's life was endangered. To his misfortune, Vander Zalm governs the province with the greatest pro-abortion sentiment in the country. A coalition took him to court and won. Several members of his government have publicly disowned him.

Pro-choice groups have been scurrying to lobby the federal government to create full access, rather than re-impose limits, stressing that abortion is a health, not a legal, issue. Lacking the political savvy of the Alton group, the Canadian anti-abortion movement remains unwilling to recognise that the debate has moved beyond when life begins and is now about time limits and access.

But Brian Mulroney's pre-election nerves, more than the substance of abortion debates, look like deciding abortion access. With his eyes on a September poll, he is anxious that abortion should not be a focus of the election. Press leaks suggest that the government will try to lose as few votes as possible by settling on free access up to 16 weeks and access with rigid restrictions up to 24 weeks.

David Alton's bill, meanwhile, which went into committee stage in the Commons on Wednesday, will, if successful, mean that British doctors will refuse to perform abortions after 16 weeks for fear of contravening the 18 week limit.

Meredith Levine

POLITICAL SKETCH

The Lions and Tigers of West Belfast

Edward Pearce

GRACEFULNESS in calamity is perhaps the only thing left on the Northern Ireland scene. The lynch mob pursuit, battering with concrete posts and shooting of those two soldiers has frightened people. It should, for it was very fearful. There have been 2,600 killings since this conflict began. But some are worse than others in terms of their ability to take citizens by the throat and make them feel darkness very close at hand.

The House was trying to respond on Monday to a killing which took place on screen, not at some aseptic remove, not a routine, accepted item on the news menu — "Last night in Belfast another soldier . . ." A killing by a mob is more fearful than a rifle shot or remote controlled mine, acts of cool wickedness by a couple of assassins. Hot-blooded killing can actually be more terrible than the cold-hearted sort. Schiller has a verse which Arthur Koestler was fond of quoting. It translates roughly:

> It is a fearful thing to wake the Lion
> And fearful is the Tiger's tread
> But man himself, in his own fury
> Is the most dreadful of the dread.

"Der Schrecklichste der Schrecken" is a fair judgment on an Andersonstown mob putting its own slant onto Easter. There was no point in blaming Tom King and nobody seriously tried. Mr King has a good deal of gracefulness, and not in the glib or facile sense! Not the cleverest but arguably the nicest member of this government, he approaches terrible news with obvious, unfeigned grief. Given the inevitable banality of the things men have to say in such hapless circumstances, he maintains a decent dignity at the bottom of the pit rather movingly.

But what a melancholy performance the Ulster Unionists mostly make. They are men in dire circumstances representing areas which are visited with killing upon killing, the IRA having had a Shoot to Kill policy for some little time now. But their littleness of spirit is disastrous when by reaching out with a little generosity they could win themselves so many friends. At times their rage with the SDLP seems to run level with their dislike of the Provisionals. With the exceptions of Harold McCusker and Ken Maginnis, they are a sorry lot, dour, self-pitying, incoherent, overflowing with dull enmity and always able to bring tragedy down to the level of a trade union quarrel about boring holes.

One or two mainland members, Dale Campbell-Savours for Labour, Anthony Nelson for the Tories, complained that the non-Irish backbenchers should have been called. They were making the perfectly valid point that the murder of Corporal Wood and Corporal Howes was a United Kingdom matter. That is good Unionist thinking but perhaps also a wish to admit those not enmired in tribal hatred to the debate.

They doubtless also wanted to get at the question of the "no go area". Officially, according to Mr King, there *are* no such territories. But the two corporals in taking a short cut or a wrong turning had gone off authorised routes for soldiers in mufti. "There are," said Mr King "wiser and less wise routes to be taken". The refinement is a nice one and coupled with the withdrawal of RUC funeral patrols, not one which readily distinguishes "No go" from "Go".

THE IRONY is that Sir John Hermon, Chief Constable of the RUC, who with good reason was under intense criticism from every sort of small "l" liberal for his odd and inexplicable behaviour in the Stalker affair, suspected of an implied high tolerance towards high-handedness at the extremities of prejudice, is now murmured against for his broad church conciliatoriness in withdrawing patrols from the two funerals. He was denounced by the indescribable patriot Adams for complicity with the Michael Stone killings. Back in civilised company, though hardly very rationally, he is criticised by fellow Protestants for weakness and concession.

Ken Maginnis was able to complain very fairly that the IRA, with their radios and the mobility of those sinister black taxis, were in control of their streets. If this was not a "no go" area, it was a Van Meegeren copy of the highest order. But all Ulster debates are incoherent cries for help. People say things about "ending this cycle of blood and terror". But the present cycle goes back to 1969; and the two communities, as we now with the sweet humbug of the late twentieth century insist on calling Gaels and Saxons, have been killing each other in this corner of Ireland since at least the great massacres of 1642.

The official view of Labour, voiced by Kevin MacNamara, was cautious in the extreme. Sir John had to make whatever decisions he felt necessary in order to police the area. Somehow, one doubts if Mrs Thatcher will see it that way. No go areas constitute an extraordinary challenge to her notions of resolute government. For once, the retributive qualities of the Prime Minister look apt and fitting.

She did alas, have a policy in this part of the world, rather a good, liberal one which enraged the mewling Unionists, and gave no joy to the Pol Pots of West Belfast. The Anglo-Irish agreement, the child of Douglas Hurd and Robert Armstrong before his fall, was intended to sustain constitutional nationalism and the then sophisticated government in Dublin. It sought either to ignore the Unionists or to stampede them. By showing returns on constitutional skills, it tried to underpin all the decencies which John Hume, then, as today, voiced so impressively. It may be a source of satisfaction among the sour and muttering Unionists that such gains have largely been lost.

The good bright fallacy of the Anglo-Irish agreement was that it contained elements of optimism and constructive thinking. A week of funerals has put an end to that sort of nonsense. We are back now in the pure Housman territory natural to the province. Whatever we do will be underwritten by the "sure foundation of despair". □

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'Wapping' showdown for TV union?

LONDON Weekend Television's secret strike-breaking arrangements to broadcast programmes from Holland may have been planned for many months. For ever since TV-am locked out and then sacked its ACTT members the press — especially the Murdoch papers — has been awash with rumours that the ITV companies are about to "do a Wapping".

Such promptings date back to February 1986, when David Owen dropped a bombshell at the *What the Papers Say* awards by drawing an explicit parallel between the television and newspaper industries, stating that "the ACTT is as bad as the NGA". Owen's complaints were echoed in the Peacock report, which argued that the broadcasting industry was "wasteful of resources through over-manning and self-indulgent working practices".

In the Zeebrugge aftermath the press, led by the *Sunday Times*, claimed to have found proof positive of ACTT profligacy — a technician allegedly put in a £92,000 pay claim to cover his work on the incident. This turned out to be a gross exaggeration of the facts and, in retrospect, the "story" looks more and more like a management leak intended to attract the inevitable union-bashing, a softening up for what was to come.

The ground chosen for the showdown was the 1987 Caring Christmas Roadshow. TV-am management used this occasion to tear up established custom, threatening union members with disciplinary action if they refused to accept company instructions. The ACTT shop voted by four to one in a secret ballot to take industrial action.

"Rats! Striking TV Men Hold The Needy to Ransom" screamed *The Star*, 24 November. Other offerings included "The Scandal of TV Men Licenced To Print Money" (*Today*, 25 November) and "Lavish Life Of The Men Who Blacked Charity Show" (*Evening Standard*, 25 November). A clue to what lay behind these familiar headlines is provided by *The Times* of 27 November, which related that the Prime Minister regards British television as "the last bastion of restrictive practices in British industry". The same day's *Mail*: "TV is the last bastion of labour restrictions (sic) . . .But not for much longer . . . The imminent arrival of many more channels via cable and satellite means that the franchised companies simply will not be able to afford these extravagances. With the arrival of new technologies in the world of television, the bell has tolled for time-honoured abuses and old restrictive ways."

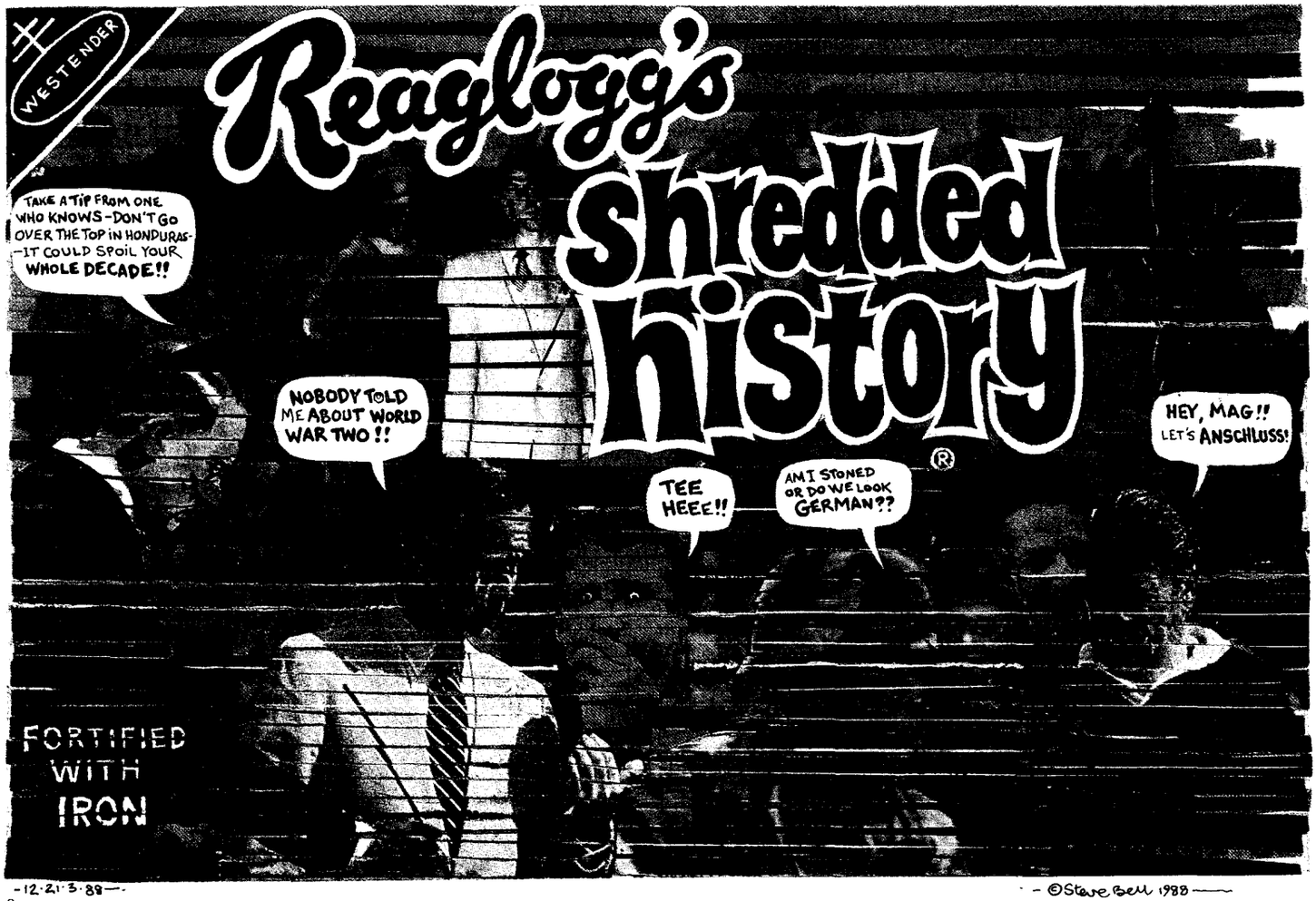
This, then, is the sub-text of much press reporting of the TV-am dispute and, for that matter, LWT's current conflict. Like the long-running press campaign against the BBC, it is based on the premise that the end is nigh for the present system of public service broadcasting. This approach isn't altogether unrelated to the media interests of certain newspaper editors and proprietors. However, its assumptions about an imminent TV Wapping are largely wishful thinking.

This isn't to deny that the ITV companies are eager to make major changes in working practices in order to achieve significant economies over the next few years. Faced with falling advertising revenues, the likelihood of competition from cable, satellite and possibly even a privatised Channel 4, not to mention terrestrial Channels 5 and 6, plus worries over being priced out of the global market for TV programmes and the potential effects of the government demand that 25 per cent of programmes come from the independent sector, the ITV companies are deeply concerned about their future financial viability.

Their fears were crystallised by the recent NERA report commissioned by the ITV Association. This warns that ITV could be losing £500m a year by the mid-90s. The blunt message is that unless costs are slashed there will be little point in bidding for franchises in 1992. This lies behind the efforts by all the ITV companies to come to agreements with unions over new working practices.

But for the most part these agreements are being thrashed out without recourse to TV-am — and LWT — style methods, although occasional strains show. At the end of last year Tyne-Tees became embroiled in a major dispute with its electricians, and more recently Thames ran into trouble with the Musicians Union. Although the ITV companies certainly have their hawks, the general consensus seems to be that TV-am's Bruce Gyngell has not played a positive role in an extremely delicate bargaining process.

Julian Petley


WESTENDER
Reaglogg's Shredded history
TAKE A TIP FROM ONE WHO KNOWS - DON'T GO OVER THE TOP IN HONDURAS - IT COULD SPOIL YOUR WHOLE DECADE!!
NOBODY TOLD ME ABOUT WORLD WAR TWO!!
TEE HEEE!!
AM I STONED OR DO WE LOOK GERMAN??
HEY, MAG!! LET'S ANSCHLUSS!
FORTIFIED WITH IRON
-12·21·3·88-
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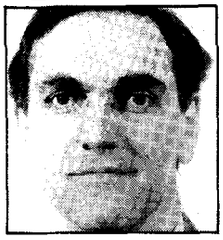

BEN PIMLOTT

'There seem to be no depths to which these people will not sink': a translation

WILL THE AUTHORITIES be speaking in the same terms about Northern Ireland in 2008 as they are today? Certainly the past two decades, since the present troubles began, have produced little change in the language of official response. The main element — after every miserable tragedy — is *moral condemnation* linked to the notion that those who commit acts of violence are abnormal, exceptional, even social outcasts.

The aftermath of the Milltown lynchings provides characteristic examples of the genre. Within minutes of receiving the news, those expected to make observations made the observations that were expected of them. "There seem to be no depths to which these people will not sink," said the Prime Minister. "People who stoop to such barbarous and evil savagery," said the Northern Ireland Secretary, "have no place in civilised society." An RUC spokesman called the murders "an obscenity" committed by "depraved and perverted people".

How often have we heard such remarks before and how many times will they be heard again? A cynic might estimate the degree of official dismay by the number of key words that occur in the same sentence. A sick game would be to contrast appropriate reactions. A bomb in a crowded church, for instance, might rate: "There are no evil limits to which these depraved and perverted savages would not obscenely sink," and so on.

And all of it, of course, misses the point. For the sad truth about Northern Ireland is not the existence of evil, depravity or savagery in the province — though as in all troubled lands, war loosens the inhibitions of the aggressive and the amoral. It is that violence, both spontaneous and calculated, reflects the misery and hatred in whole communities. Hence the inevitable response to Milltown — police swoops, interrogations, arrests and convictions — will provide a measure of retributive justice but will do nothing to reduce the problem. Exemplary punishment only works in the context of social disapproval, or as a deterrent. In West Belfast, neither applies.

Nor did they apply when the recent kaleidoscope of events began. The shootings of the IRA suspects in Gibraltar are precisely a demonstration that rooting out perpetrators, however necessary it may be, is at best a peripheral aspect of policy and one which can easily bring fresh disasters. Whatever went wrong in Gibraltar — whether the order to fire if there was not an immediate surrender came from above, or whether the British forces involved were simply not instructed to take every precaution to capture the bombers alive — the episode will be remembered as one of the biggest blunders in the long, sorry tale of attempts to reduce killings in the province. Yet that catastrophe was itself a product of the illusion that this is a war against a numerically finite enemy, and the first task is to eliminate its members one by one.

THE SAME ILLUSION lay behind the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement. Ostensibly, the Agreement was political: aimed at massaging the national identity of Catholics on both sides of the border, and isolating Sinn Fein who, it was believed, would lose support if there was a symbolic Dublin presence in Belfast. It also seemed to make international sense, by showing previously sceptical foreigners that the British government was prepared to be flexible. But the major underlying aim was improved security. The Agreement was supposed to produce better cross-border co-operation on policing. Above all, the Agreement was intended to produce extradition. The British hope was that Dublin's thank-you present would be a flow of wanted men from Irish to British gaols and courts, thereby undermining the Provisionals' military strength. It hasn't happened. But — and this is a critical point — even if the unexpected occurred and Charles Haughey delivered extradition on a plate, in the present climate it might actually cause more trouble in terms of nationalist emotion than it would be worth. As Sinn Fein has shown so often before, the martyrdom card, skilfully played, can be a trump.

> *'Tthe Gibraltar shootings were a product of the illusion that this is a war against a numerically finite enemy, and that the first task is to eliminate its members one by one'*

The biggest political masterstroke of the Agreement appeared to be that it infuriated the Unionists even more than it annoyed Sinn Fein. Hence it could be sold to the majority of moderate or uncertain Catholics as a concession. But the difficulty about masterstrokes is that they raise expectations. This one so far has mainly produced disappointment.

The British have been disappointed because, despite some recent successes in penetrating the IRA command structure and in the uncovering of arms hauls, the hoped-for co-operation with the southern Irish has not been forthcoming. Dublin has been disappointed because its involvement in Northern Ireland affairs has been no more than token, while British handling of the Birmingham Six, Stalker and Gibraltar affairs has been tactless, in terms of Irish public opinion, to say the least. The Northern Catholics have been disappointed because those who supported the Agreement thought that their lives might improve as a result of it. Everybody involved is disappointed because the SDLP, who were supposed to be the main beneficiaries, have singularly failed to dent the rock-solid Sinn Fein ghettoes of West Belfast.

Meanwhile the level of violence does not lessen. This was true even before Gibraltar and the funeral killings. Indeed, the death rate since 1985 has shown an increase. In 1984, the toll for the province was 44; in 1987 it was 97. In the five years up to the Agreement, Belfast had become almost incident free, with most attacks occurring in the country districts, and close to the border.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement cannot now be wished away. It provides a framework for discussion which must be used, and work is needed to calm understandable Southern suspicions of British arrogance and high-handedness, if not of indifference to Catholic grievances. But what recent weeks and months do conclusively demonstrate is that the Agreement can never again be regarded as a solution.

THERE ARE no solutions to the Northern Ireland problem, but there are remedies which, determinedly applied, can have an impact upon it. During the nineteenth century potato famine, British economic doctrines of laissez-faire did more to kill the Irish people than centuries of military incursion. In the 1980s economic Thatcherism is to blame for much of what has happened. The manufacturing base of Belfast has collapsed since 1979. Catholics in Northern Ireland are two-and-a-half times more likely to be unemployed than Protestants. The present government's policies have helped to create a culture of unemployment on the Catholic council estates and Sinn Fein has adopted that culture, identified with it, spoken for it, based itself upon it. The only way to start to undermine the culture is by providing jobs.

Mrs Thatcher's trumpeted "inner cities" campaign is supposedly based on private enterprise. No capitalist in his or her right mind, however, would set up shop in West Belfast today. That, of course, is how Sinn Fein likes it. The other possibility is for this government to swallow its pride and do more of what it refuses to do on the mainland: provide employment through public investment. Many Catholics are would-be building workers. A massive housing programme would help. Last week there was a province-wide protest about NHS cuts. The health service is labour intensive. Spending more on health care would be a productive start.

Politically, there are no rabbits to be pulled out of hats. The proposal, increasingly advanced in middle-class (and especially socialist) circles, in favour of British political parties organising on a constituency basis in the province, reflects a widespread resentment at Northern Ireland's alienation from mainstream political life.

Such a view deserves a hearing and may eventually provide the best hope. Immediately, however, the nihilism of the IRA has to be met by the opposite, in terms of direct economic intervention. There is a need to understand and reduce — fast — the anger that turns killers into heroes. "We must restore a clear ethic of personal responsibility," Mrs Thatcher said last weekend in a speech directed at the United Kingdom as a whole. "We need to establish that the main person to blame for each crime is the criminal himself." Quite so. And Milltown shows how much we need also to make politicians see their own responsibility for the corrupting consequences of social inaction. □

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Even worms turn

Last week's "historic" budget will indeed transform British society. In the first of three articles,* STUART HALL *asks if there is nothing that the English middle class cannot stomach

"NIGEL'S BUDGET was the obituary for the doctrine of high taxation. It represented the defeat of everything Labour thought was permanent in political life. It was the epitaph for socialism." It isn't surprising that Mrs Thatcher chose the occasion of the budget for another of her apocalyptic pronouncements. Long after the details of "Nigel's" economics have faded from memory, his "moral economy" continues to leave a lasting and indelible impression.

This budget was "about" the moral values and social principles on which the Thatcherite revolution is premised. Its purpose was to bring about what Labour once called, half in jest, "an irreversible shift of wealth and power" to what, in times gone by, we used to call the "ruling classes". The decision to transfer to the super-rich in tax relief *exactly* the sum (£2 billion) which experts have suggested is the minimum required to bring some relief to the NHS was not, in one so calculating as our Nigel, a mere coincidence. The press has made much of the Chancellor's "political nerve". What it failed to note was that social insolence which is the "touch of class" he brings to a cabinet now populated by petit-bourgeois *enragées.*

The budget and the new Social Fund were designed together: the two faces, inextricably linked, of Thatcherite prosperity. The "setting free" of the super-entrepreneur and the containment of the underclass within the calculus of a new New Poor Law are part of the same package. As we know, the poor are responsible for their own poverty. The rich, however, who have everything, *for that very reason,* deserve more. This is Thatcherism's moral economy. At least no one can now say we don't know where we are headed.

There always has been an argument about exactly what levels of taxation are "fair" or "reasonable" or even politically acceptable. But, beneath that, there is a broader calculus which connects the very idea of taxation with two fundamental principles. First, you don't systematically tax the rich, who can pay, proportionately less than you tax the poor. This notion puts taxation in touch with the elementary idea of social justice. Second, taxation, however irksome to pay, symbolises the fact that we all have some sort of moral responsibility for the society we live in — a responsibility which cannot be reduced to individual self-interest. It is, in short, a sort of primary "cost" or charge on citizenship. This puts taxation in touch with the concept of the social good.

I apologise for mentioning a moral concept. For what Mr Lawson's budget and the PM's triumphalist gloss, with that delicate trace of suburban violence, make plain is that what the budget is an epitaph for is precisely the concepts of social justice and the public good. Try as she may the Prime Minister simply cannot get her mind around these two ideas. They belong to "the past" — part of the unserviceable baggage we have to get rid of in order for Britain to be "great" again. Mr Hurd (who, like Kenneth Baker, the press keeps representing, on extremely slender evidence, as a "reluctant Thatcherite"), recently observed, *en passant,* that "social cohesion is quite different from social equality — indeed the two are ultimately incompatible". 'Nuff said.

Rustle of banknotes

As for the social good: "We have pushed the balance back in favour of the individual", the PM told the Conservative Council in Buxton. Which "individual" is this? Thatcherism has been extremely clever at exploiting the divisions between those in work and the unemployed, between the underclass and those whom prosperity has touched, between those who are better off and those who think they will be better off tomorrow. But very few of these "individuals" actually figure in the Chancellor's calculations. The underclasses have never figured very prominently in Tory budgets. But this was not a bonanza, either, for the rising small entrepreneur, the "hard-pressed" middle manager, the small saver or the new enfranchised "Sid". This is one for the big boys, the heroes of the Department of Enterprise, Lord Young's "Supermen", who can't get out of bed without the rustle of banknotes.

No doubt the attempt will be made to harness the rising petty-bourgeoisie to the Heroes of Capital

THE Sun

Wednesday, March 16, 1988 20p SUN SALE LAST MONTH: 4,197,326

BUDGET '88

LOTSA LOVELY LOLLY!

Lawson cuts taxes for all and Burton boss (old 5-times-a-night) is £5,000 a week better off

Sir Ralph Halpern . . . big boost

Mr Kinnock . . . £53 more

WE'RE in the money, folks, after Chancellor Nigel Lawson's historic tax-slashing Budget yesterday.

Triumphant Mr Lawson cashed in on Britain's booming economy to cut the basic rate by 2p in the £ and lop a whopping 20p in the £ off the top rate.

Every wage earner will benefit—from high-flying heroes to the humblest worker in the land.

The average family will be better off by a fiver a week.

Neil Kinnock—whose salary as Opposition leader is £44,000—will pocket £53 a week more.

And Burton stores chief Sir

By TREVOR KAVANAGH Political Editor

Ralph Halpern—famous for his five times a night "explosion"—will get a bonking great boost of £3m a week.

The announcement of the top rate cut caused a near riot in the Commons as Labour left-wingers chanted "Shame" and "You're disgusting, Lawson."

ROWDIES

The Chancellor's speech was held up for 10 minutes as Deputy Speaker Harold Walker tried in vain to control the rowdies.

The uproar followed an earlier exchange in which Scottish Nationalist MP Alex Salmond was thrown out of the House.

But despite the protests, the Chancellor was undeterred.

After taking the basic rate of tax down to 25p in the £—the lowest for 50 years—he promised to carry on cutting.

He declared that his target of 20p in the £ would be introduced "as soon as possible."

And on TV last night, he said Britons could look forward to prosperity "higher than any of us have ever known."

Mr Lawson clawed back some of yesterday's handout by putting

4p on a pack of 20 cigarettes, 2p on a pack of five cigars, 1p on a pint of beer or cider, 4p on

Continued on Page 2

ALL THE BUDGET NEWS: Pages 2, 3, 4 and Centre Pages

The propaganda drive of the government is backed by the even more brass-necked assertions of the millionaire-owned press

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Graham Balfour-Lynn, 32, single and runs a one-man business, developing residential property in London.

"Cash drive, including incentives, beyond a given point becomes irrelevant to an entrepreneur — diminishing returns set in; pure ego and the pressures from a market or inside a firm he's built up take over. I spend a moderate amount, but I don't expect my future consumption to rise a lot. I'll often play music, read a book or go to a gallery after lunch; effective optimal working time may only be four to five hours a day — that's how you get results. Incentives to work longer hours may be counter-productive.

"I'm from a family of medical background and I've seen nurses who work harder than I do. So do miners. Generally I think that people like me do need to justify statistically high incomes in terms of a contribution to society."

Interviews by Robert Silver and Ben Webb

through the ubiquitous ideological figure of the "taxpayer". The "taxpayer" is an individual whose only function in life is to "pay out". Whereas, once relieved by a benificent state of the need to keep on paying, what the state used to take away will immediately start to "trickle down", making everybody prosperous.

"As a result," Mrs Thatcher tells us, "the community has been growing too, making more resources available for the community's needs." Oh really? How much resources? Which community? "Taxpayers", as we know, have one-track minds. They cannot entertain more than one idea at a time. "Taxpayers" don't send their children to school, never get ill, never have any rubbish to collect, don't get old or have relatives who are already old or might need help. They have never met anyone who is poor, or needs supplementary benefit to survive or is currently out of a job.

They actually *enjoy* walking through the filth of London's streets, would *prefer* it if the street lights didn't work and positively aspire to return to the Good Old Victorian days when the sewers were still open. So hoisted are they by their own bootstraps that, especially, they don't need doctors, nurses, hospital orderlies, ambulance drivers, or any of those public sector "layabouts".

Why should they have to pay for roads when much of the time they don't even *drive* on them. What sort of "value for money" is that?

Prosperity of the Thatcherite kind has never "trickled down" and there is no good reason why it should start to do so at this late stage of the game. It cannot become "available" because (a) Mr Lawson has just given most of it away to the rich, and (b) Mrs Thatcher has declared a social war on exactly the means by which "resources" become "available" to "community needs": the NHS, the welfare state, local authority and the statutory services. Forward to "hard times".

Can the English middle classes really stomach *anything?* Is there no moral outrage or social indignity that can give them pause? Once or twice, last week, I caught the merest whiff of guilt and shame and thought I heard the extremely feeble stirring of the consciences of the public-sector middle class — that "saving remnant" to whom it still matters that they can face themselves in the mirror first thing in the morning. Just a hint, a glimmer, the faintest movement in the undergrowth: the sort of sound worms make when they turn. I must have been mistaken. . . □

LAWSON'S BUDGET

The new idle rich

JOHN RENTOUL *predicts conspicuous high living, longer holidays and early retirement for the Lawson Rich, as the budget elevates them out of reach*

THE 1988 BUDGET will indeed have a "place in the history books", as the Chancellor modestly announced last week. It will go down as one of the biggest feats of social engineering by a dogmatic political clique this century.

The effect of the budget on the British social structure up to the year 2000 (barring the election of a majority radical Labour government) will be to enrich and entrench the leisured and partly leisured rich, the "Lawson Five Per Cent". In time, the effect of the budget on the distribution of wealth will transform British society, giving a sharp upward twist to the London-led property boom and producing a larger reservoir of liquid assets for the conspicuous young rich to spend, as inheritance operates in its closed system.

The top tax cuts in 1979 looked dramatic, but they directly affected only a very small number of high-income families — fewer than 30,000 of them.

Last week's tax cuts are very different. There are one million families which are big beneficiaries. And by "big" the Chancellor does not mean the less than a fiver a week doled out to the average earner.

Many of last week's individual examples are, as in 1979, quite spectacular — such as Ralph Halpern's £5,000-a-week tax bonus and Baring's Christopher Heath's half-million-a-year. But the £2 billion given to the higher-rate taxpayers this year (and more every year after) is a significant amount of money in economy-wide terms. It amounts to an average £2,000 every year for every household in the top 5 per cent. This overall effect is big enough and widespread enough to have an effect on the whole social anatomy of Britain.

The Chancellor is proud of the fact that his budget will widen the gap between high and low incomes. This will power the "dynamo" of incentive, he says. But this single budget will have almost as much of a "disequalising" effect as all the earlier Thatcher budgets put together.

It will increase the "ratio of inequality", a measure of the size of the relative gap between high and low incomes. In 1979, the best-off tenth of the population had six-and-a-half times as much income as the poorest tenth. Last year, that ratio had increased to eight times. This year, partly because of the budget, partly because of the continuing escalation of top salaries, the top tenth may have nearly nine times as much income as the bottom tenth.[1] We have waited nine years for the enrichment of the rich to pull the poor up with them. It hasn't happened yet.

Although Tories are keen on unequal incomes, they do keep talking about "spreading wealth more widely". But there is a direct link between income differentials and the distribution of wealth — most obviously through house prices, because in the long run house prices follow incomes.

The £2,000-a-year handout per family could feed into house prices, multiplied by the factor of 3.5 that lenders to the rich will lend, raising the prices of the most expensive homes by £7,000 more than they would otherwise rise. Add to this the effect of the poll tax, which some academics think could boost the prices of expensive houses by 10 to 15 per cent, while restraining those of cheaper houses.

The abolition in the 1986 budget of tax on capital transfers made more than seven years before death means that substantial sums are now being passed on by parents in their 60s — soon to be augmented by tax-free capital gains made between 1965 and 1982.

Keeping it in the family

The average individual (let alone couple) in the top 5 per cent is now worth around £200,000 (a figure which has risen by £40,000 in real terms since 1979). Much of it is tied up in the house (average house prices in central London are now over £100,000, while the national average is £41,437), but there are ways of releasing this money through second mortgages and leaseback schemes, which can then be passed on to the children, or used to retire early on. The budget increase in tax relief for people selling their businesses on retirement will also boost what marketing people call "silver power".

The new idle rich of the end of this century may not be the same as the leisured class of the end of the last, in that they will consist mainly of the young and the early-retired, although they may still work for a few profitable years in their middle age.

Very little research into the pattern of inher-

Chris Goodall, 32, is a partner in a London management consultancy, which he co-started. He read Economics at Cambridge. A Conservative, he is not a member of the party. He is single, lives in central London and has been paying tax at 60 per cent.

"Very high earners are emotionally uncomfortable over these changes. It's clearly wrong that low or non-earners will soon face 60 to 70 per cent marginal rates, or higher, on tax and welfare benefits together — when the relatively affluent, who've already done well, will get massive rises in post-tax incomes. It's an issue of unfairness.

"Cutting the top rate has a real, but limited, incentive impact. It will make foreign managers more willing to move and work here within multinational or for British firms. It's balanced by disincentives much further down the poverty trap.

"The British tax system now, by the standards of nearly every other country, hardly has any progressive characteristics. This will be worsened by a poll tax, which is, on average, not merely neutral but negative — you pay a lower ratio of your income as you get wealthier.

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Charles Jonscher, 33, is a partner in a London management consultancy, which recently absorbed his own smaller, telecommunications consultancy. He's a part-time lecturer in economics at MIT. Single, he has a flat in Belgravia. He's been paying tax at 60 per cent partly on his share of profits.

"Globally, I do think there's a limited link between cuts in higher tax rates and how hard businessmen work. Personally, what makes me work harder are either demands and deadlines of given contracts or the interest value of a project which, say, means I'll work at reports over weekends.

"I'd have cut the top rate to 50 per cent, not 40 per cent. Above 50 per cent you don't raise extra money. There's a vast psychological incentive to find loopholes, on which the self-employed spend a lot of time, which is, from the economy's point of view, a waste.

"I think on balance that Chancellors should systematically try to reduce gaps between rich and poor, especially by applying a surplus as the economy grows; but I'd now stress regional aid to redress geographical gaps — north and south, not income and wealth in a global sense.

itance among the middle class has been done, but one study (by Moira Munro, University of Glasgow, 1987) suggests that bequests involving property do nothing to spread wealth over time. That is not what Margaret Thatcher really wants anyway: she wants wealth to "topple like a cascade down the line of the family" (March 1986), not "spread ever more widely" among the people (Conservative Manifesto, June 1987).

Inheritance is very much kept in the family. The Glasgow study showed that three-quarters of inheritors are the children of the deceased. Most of the rest (20 per cent) are nephews and nieces.

So what will happen when the Lawson rich hand their wealth down to get round what remains of death duties? These windfalls will devolve on home-owning children in their 30s already "comfortably off". They may move to a bigger house, increasing the pressure on top house prices. Or the balance may be tilted in favour of sending grandchildren to private schools. Grandchildren already at private schools will have money set by for university and early adulthood.

Some of this futuristic cascade will no doubt be invested in productive uses, even if it is via a savings plan to provide for school fees. But if resources were invested in the health and education services instead, not to mention the infrastructure, then the British economy would be made stronger, demand would be increased in a less inflationary way which is less likely to suck in imports.

As the first wave of property owners (who bought in the 1930s) prepares to die, large dollops of free capital will become available to a select class of people who are mostly well-off already. There will not be a capital-owning democracy, just a larger number of plutocrats and a bigger gap between them and the rest of the middle class, let alone the "underclass".

There will be nothing democratic about the character of this *fin de siècle* social order. The widening income gap will make it more likely that those at the top will employ those at the bottom, if not as personal servants, as a personal service class, which will iron the shirts, clean the split-level penthouses and nappy-change the children of the rich. And the widening absolute wealth gap will set this class divide in an increasingly bitter-tasting aspic.

Economy of truth

When the government is asked about this increasing social divide, it simply denies it. Facts are tiresome for a government absorbed in a marketing daydream of glossy enterprise.

Margaret Thatcher told the Conservative Council at Buxton last weekend: "After nine tax-cutting budgets, we are all working people, who basically want the same things." What she meant to say was: "After five budgets which increased taxes, four which cut them (before elections) and one (last week) which left the overall burden unchanged . . ." (Yes, there have been *ten* Thatcher budgets, 1979 to 1988 inclusive). And for her to announce, having presided over the highest peacetime tax burden, the "obituary for the doctrine of high taxation" is unbearable. Taxation is still heavier now as a share of national income than when she took over in 1979, though disguised, of course, by the switch from income tax to VAT and national insurance.[2]

Which brings us to another big question. If, as the Chancellor himself admitted last week, "it will not be possible in this budget to reduce the burden of taxation — that is to say, to reduce taxation as a share of GDP" — then one person's tax cut is, as surely as the Tories are not a working-class party, another person's tax increase. Luckily for the Tories, when the economy is growing this fast, you can pay a higher share of your income in tax and still be better off.

Another grotesque untruth has been used to justify bringing down the top rates of income tax. "A reduction in the top rates of income tax can, over time, result in a higher, not a lower, yield to the Exchequer," said the Chancellor just before he was so rudely interrupted. "Despite a substantial reduction in the top rate of tax in 1979, and the subsequent abolition of the investment income surcharge in 1984, the top 5 per cent of taxpayers today contribute a third as much again in real terms as they did in 1978-79, Labour's last year."

Russell Jones, economist, Hoare Govett.

"The government have given up any pretence of trying to be equitable. They've gone full out to put money in the pockets of the people who vote for them. There is no evidence to prove that a drop in tax from 60 per cent to 40 per cent will encourage people to work harder. It may keep people in the country but I don't think it will increase economic efficiency. It's based on the Laffer curve which has been laughed out of court in the US.

"I believe it is a moral issue anyway. The people who benefit will be at the top end of the earnings scale, while those at the bottom have barely received anything. It would have been more equitable if the National Insurance ceiling had been abolished or the lower rates of tax had been cut.

"I couldn't work any harder anyway."

Gavin Millar, barrister.

"I would rather the extra money was spent on the health service, and I think most people who are benefitting do too. I don't know how people spend this sort of windfall, but I don't think it can increase productivity. If they wanted to produce an enterprise culture they shouldn't have cut income tax, they should have cut VAT which is crippling small businesses.

"In the public sector people are working harder and have only got a small increase in the money they take home. A teacher is taking more lessons a week because of rate-capping and only getting £5 extra. The tax cuts mean nothing."

The idea is that the Conservatives have, by reducing the top rate of income tax from 83 per cent to 60 per cent in 1979, increased the share of tax paid by the rich. It may seem paradoxical, they say, but it is true, because the rich were given the incentive to earn more and put less effort into tax avoidance.

In fact, it is paradoxical because it is *not* true.

Nigel's Whoppers

The reason the top 5 per cent contributed a bigger share of income tax receipts was because more of them were paying tax at the higher rates that the Tories *didn't* abolish in 1979. In 1979, many people in the top 5 per cent still only paid tax at the standard rate (3.5 per cent in fact paid higher rates). Now, they all pay at higher rates, between 40 and 60 per cent. The very top rate may have been cut in 1979, but only a few thousands paid that anyway: what mattered were the people who paid tax at 40, 45, 50, 55, 60 per cent. Their numbers swelled dramatically, because pay went up faster than the tax thresholds.

And as for the idea that people who are avoiding paying tax at 60 per cent will suddenly come forward with voluntary contributions to the general good at 40 per cent, probably the less said the better.

Sadly, this is not the only one of Nigel's whoppers. "Everybody will benefit — is benefiting — from the success of the economy," he told Radio Four's *Today* programme the morning after the budget. It is true that average earnings have risen by nearly a quarter (23.5 per cent) in real terms. But all that people on supplementary benefit or a state pension know of Lawson's "success of the economy" is the tail-lights of someone else's Porsche disappearing into the distance. □

1. These figures are derived from Institute for Fiscal Studies estimates of the distribution of after-tax income and benefits, adjusted to take account of the differing needs of single people, couples and families with children.

2. Total taxes as a proportion of national income (Gross Domestic Product at market prices) were 33.9 per cent in 1978-79, the last year of the Callaghan government: in successive years the proportion has been 35.3, 36.3, 39.4, 39.1, 38.7, 39.5, 38.8, 37.8, 38.0, with 37.9 forecast for 1988-89.

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The neighbourhood effect

Rich and poor live in different countries, but now even the working class who live in rich areas vote Tory.

JOLYON JENKINS ***reports on how the budget strengthens the Conservative stranglehold on the south***

SOMEBODY — maybe Nigel Lawson himself — should erect a small memorial to the post-war consensus in Clerkenwell, east London. This area is the old home of the *New Statesman*, but, more significantly, it now represents the extremes of Britain's poverty and wealth. If you measure the prosperity of each of the nation's tiny census enumeration districts, you find that Clerkenwell ward contains some of the wealthiest and poorest, cheek by jowl.

The honour could also go to Hyde Park or Millbank wards, both populated almost exclusively by the super-rich, apart from a few pockets of extreme deprivation. Mrs Thatcher could even confer a plaque on College ward in her own dear Dulwich, which has the slightly different distinction of being among the most gentrified (in the sense of having lots of professionals) in the country.

These results come from a computer analysis carried out for us this week by the Centre for Environmental Studies. But although Clerkenwell, Millbank and Hyde Park in one way neatly encapsulate Thatcher's Britain, an exhaustive analysis by the CES of class, wealth and poverty around the whole country* provides a different and in some respects more depressing picture. Disparities in living standards are becoming ever more greater *between* local communities, but more homogenous *within* the communities. Nigel Lawson's budget for the rich and nearly-rich was also for a Thatcherite constituency that is *geographically* concentrated. Rich and poor don't rub shoulders; they increasingly live in different worlds.

Only a few parts of the country buck the trend. Inner London is one, where the polarity within areas is a consequence of yuppification. Only the rich can now afford to buy property there, and only the very poor are able to live in council housing. Middle income groups — skilled manual workers, low grade white collar workers — are being squeezed out.

The budget is bound to increase these geographical inequalities. This has interesting consequences for the way people vote. To see why, we have to look at some intriguing work by Ron Johnston and Charles Pattie of Sheffield University. They are members of a new breed of politically sophisticated geographers, who presented some of their findings to the Institute of British Geographers earlier this year.

The argument goes like this. Everyone knows that since 1979 the South has voted Conservative and the North (particularly Scotland) has tended to vote Labour. The saloon bar explanation is that the North is poor and working-class, while the South is rich and middle-class. Not so, say Johnston and Pattie — or at least, only partly so. Their analysis shows that in the three elections since 1979, people's reasons for voting the way they do have had less and less to do with their own class, and more and more to do with the socio-economic character of the bit of the country they live in. People in the same social position have voted very differently in different places. The more Labour-leaning the area you live in, the more likely you are to vote Labour, even if your own class ought to make you a Tory. As Johnston and Pattie put it, "People are increasingly influenced by the class composition of their immediate milieu".

Johnston and Pattie weren't the first to discover this. There is a well-documented phenomenon called the "neighbourhood effect", which shows that people tend to vote in part according to their neighbours' political predilections. No one quite knows why. Psephologists have assumed that voting preferences are like contagious diseases — spread by personal contact. People talk to their neighbours and convert each other. This model produces the "right" results, though as a mechanism it is somewhat implausible. According to Professor Bill Millar at Strathclyde University, voting preferences depend to a large extent on the proportions of people in a constituency who belong to two "core" classes. One of these is composed of administrators, the other of unionised manual workers. The proportion of the total population in each class is quite small, but they seem to exercise an influence out of all proportion to their numbers.

Bad news

Johnston and Pattie have taken this a stage further. They have shown that the effect of local socio-economic conditions as well as the effect of "core class" voters became even more pronounced over the last two elections. The level of local unemployment, for example, was nearly twice as important a determinant of voting behaviour in 1987 as in 1979. And they have demonstrated that beyond the constituency neighbourhood effect there is a *regional* neighbourhood effect. Increasingly, people are influenced by the wider context of which the constituency is part. That context can be either geographical, or "functional" — the *type* of place, rather than where it literally is.

Interestingly, the theory broke down in London, where Labour should have done far better than it did, according to the numbers of the lower "core class" and the level of deprivation. Johnston suspects this was due to the tabloid and Tory "loony left" campaign and racism towards black candidates.

This is almost all bad news for Labour. Even the working class in the South don't vote as much as they should, or as much as they used to. The South has got more prosperous, and has influenced even those people who haven't particularly benefited from that prosperity. Last week's tax cuts make things even worse: as the CES survey shows, the rich now live together, and so Lawson's largesse will reinforce the aura of well-being that hangs over their parts of the country.

One of the few viable political strategies left to Labour must be to argue that this prosperity is largely ineffective. Many Tory voters must be finding that what they really want, money can't buy. They want good schools, proper street lighting, and a thriving health service. They're not rich enough to buy their way out of the state system altogether, so their quality of life can now only be improved significantly by more collective provision, not by tax cuts.

The Tories have exactly the reverse problem: how to recapture the inner cities and other deprived areas which are becoming ever more strongly Labour. (It is of course a less pressing problem than Labour's because they can stay in power without the help of the inner cities.) One way (the traditional political way) is to try to make a lot of the inhabitants a lot better off, though this is expensive and no longer very effective. The middle classes who live in poor regions are less bribeable with tax cuts than they used to be. A second method is yuppification — encouraging Conservative voters to move bodily into Labour strongholds. That is clearly happening in London. Once an area has been yuppified, it becomes hard for Labour to reverse the voting trend, because even poorer people may start to vote Conservative. Yuppification, though, remains almost exclusively a London phenomenon.

The third and most radical method is to try to change the political *culture* of the inner cities; to hype up the joys of living in an invigorating, brisk, enterprise environment, so that Labour voters are conned into thinking that their neighbourhood is nicer than it is. That's clearly part of the government's strategy.

What the Tories really need to know is precisely how the neighbourhood effect works so that they can stop Labour voters reinforcing each other. Ron Johnston tends to discount the "contagion" mechanism, and suspects that it's largely a matter of parties creating a favourable political environment through, for example, the activities of local authorities. Mrs Thatcher's new onslaught on the powers of local government suggests that she may have reached that conclusion too. □

Mike Gigney, Tory entrepreneur.

"I think Lawson's taking the piss now. If there was still 98 per cent tax as there was in the 60s then I could understand him cutting it. As it is I don't think anyone will work harder. I don't see how he can justify cutting the top rates with all the other considerations such as looking after nurses. It certainly won't increase revenue; people aren't going to work hard enough to generate the revenue required. I certainly won't work harder, I'll just spend more. People will have three skiing holidays instead of one."

* *People and Places: a classification of urban areas and residential neighbourhoods,* CES, 5 Tavistock Place, London WC1

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The dinosaurs evolve

Ford's decision to pull out of the Dundee plant because of the unions' failure to agree a single-union deal has been seen as confirming the unions' inability to modernise. It shows nothing of the sort, argues **SARAH BENTON**

The unions think again — and decide to merge and modernise

"NEANDERTHAL," said Malcolm Rifkind, Scottish Secretary; "some prehistoric boneheaded monster," elaborated Scottish industry minister Ian Lang, of Britain's trade unions. "The unions cannot sidestep the blame for the loss of this project," judged Iain Robertson, Chief Executive of the Scottish Development Agency. "If the unions are going to survive they must learn to meet the business and industrial relations needs of today."

The common assumption is that the "needs of today" demand at best a single union deal. Unless unions follow this path into tomorrow they will die out as surely as the dinosaur, for they have found no other route to survival. The evidence for both these assumptions is not substantial. A survey of workplace industrial relations carried out by the Policy Studies Institute in 1984 found that managers were evenly divided over whether they favoured dealing with one union or several. Bill Daniel, director of the PSI, said this week: "To some extent the preference for single-union deals is a symbolic one. It represents a break with the traditional British model." Richard Hyman, professor of industrial relations at Warwick University, suspected that single union deals may be only "the flavour of the month".

Still, a single-union deal was what Ford wanted and it wanted it with the AEU engineering union. The Transport and General Workers, which, along with the newly amalgamated Manufacturing, Science, Finance union, lodged the blocking objections, say that it is not in principle against such deals. It objected to two things about this one. The fact that the Ford division concerned, Electronic and Electrical, was already (profitably) operating two plants in Britain under the "Blue Book" multi-union agreement. To establish a third with the AEU alone would breach that agreement and augur ill for the future. Secondly, the AEU had not informed anyone of its hopes, and had thus broken common practice.

In fact, both these conditions can be found in at least one other factory in Britain, the new Dunlop Armaline plant in Newcastle. Dunlop is a British firm with established multi-union agreements at its other plants. Last September it set up a new plant to make long-line flexible pipes. It chose the AEU to make a deal with. There were some objections, said personnel manager Irish Leigh this week, from unions which negotiate in other Dunlop plants in the north east (notably the general union GMB and ASTMS, as it was then); they felt they should have been given the chance to make a bid for the deal. But they grumbled and gave way.

However, single-union deals are relevant only for a limited number of work processes. Dunlop Armaline is a small, single-product plant. There are few divisions of labour and the union deal keeps them few. If the future *were* to consist of single-union deals, several conditions would have to be met. There would have to be greater investment in new plants than we have seen since the economic recovery began. A tiny number of workers are currently covered by single-union deals, even where the unions co-operate enthusiastically.

Another condition for single-union deals is social cohesion. As John Grant of the EETPU emphasises, the other side of the bargain is that outward distinctions of status at a plant are abolished and workers have a more direct say in the company through a works council. Yet the man who has spoken as passionately as his larynx permits on Britain's deplorable lack of social cohesion is Home Secretary Douglas Hurd. And the budget was hardly a contribution to a less divided society in which differentials of status and salary are seen to be earned through merit, not pocketed through privilege. The trends are at odds.

The last condition is, of course, the compliance of trade unions. Most unions would, in principle, sign a single-union deal. The consistent trend away from one union per "trade" by amalgamation makes all the big unions in the private sector able to recruit anyone in a plant from personnel manager to part-time cleaner. But a procedure for deciding which unions should get the deals needs to be agreed.

Which is where the rivalry of trades unions and the weakness of the TUC General Council comes in. After its conference last September, the TUC set up a review body to examine trade union practice. It has, said one official, had good, creative discussions on issues like recruiting women and young people. On the big issue of single-union deals, Ron Todd of the TGWU and Gavin Laird of the AEU glare across an unhappy room and their implacable hostility is likely to lead to only the most anodyne recommendations.

Decline halted

Yet pessimism is not the common feeling in trade unions. Indeed, for the first time since 1979, most trade unions have discovered that they have stopped losing members. Several have had their first increases for nine years. NALGO and the GMB have both increased by 7,000; UCATT, the building union, by just under 7,000; USDAW, the shop workers, by 5,200. Both the AEU and the EETPU — whose co-operation with employers did not protect them from decline — say their membership loss "bottomed out" at the beginning of this year. So does the National Union of Teachers, which lost a lot of members during the industrial action of 1985-86.

If an historic and traumatic decline has reached

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its historic end, the main reason must be the fall in unemployment. That still leaves the unions cheerful: it proves that their dramatic membership losses, ranging from one sixth to half of their members since 1979, did not spell a long-term rejection of trade unionism by the workforce. This is what Professor Hyman calls the optimistic view: given the climate, unions have not done badly. With a better climate, they'll automatically do better too.

Bill Daniel of the PSI has a bleaker image. He calls it the "mountain gorilla" thesis of trade unions. "It's not that they're being hunted, but their natural habitat is being destroyed." The natural habitat of unions is the large production company and state employer. The new environments, of privatised firms, of firms wanting white collar, skilled or casual female workers is one in which unions cannot survive.

It is precisely here that the optimistic unions would disagree with him. While the public charge is that the union movement is a dinosaur/ostrich/carthorse/mountain gorilla, its stiff little brain addled by change, they point to considerable internal upheaval over the last two years. All attribute their increased membership in part to their internal changes. The fixation with single-union deals in new hi-tech firms has, they think, blinded many to the real employment changes in a country where private sector manufacturing shows little sign of sustained increase.

The changes they identify are: amalgamation; a range of new services for members, especially legal and insurance services; different recruitment policies in which they target members and go out and woo them; a modernised "image", especially for women; re-allocation of full-time officers and more involvement of lay members. Several have used outside research and consultants to advise on internal reform and possible recruits.

Merger wave

In 1979, the peak year of trade union membership, there were 112 unions affiliated to the TUC. Through amalgamations, that had fallen to 85 at the end of last year. Last month ASTMS and TASS (its sixth amalgamation in six years) launched the new Manufacturing, Science and Finance union. The Society of Public and Civil Servants has amalgamated with the Civil Service Union, whose membership has been ravaged by the privatisation of government departments' cleaning. More are coming. The clerical union APEX, which lost half its members through the 1980s, is to amalgamate with the GMB, Britain's second largest union, in the autumn. The long, long talks between SOGAT and the NGA (both of which amalgamated with smaller print unions in 1982) are hobbling along. The National Union of Railwaymen is contemplating merging with the National Union of Seamen. NATFHE, which recruits college and polytechnic teachers, is thinking of joining with the Association of University Teachers. UCATT is considering amalgamation with the furniture union FTAT. The AEU and EETPU merger talks are "very serious".

Internal campaigning in 1985 and 1986 for their political funds was, for many unions, the first step to a changed relationship with their members. NALGO, which announced this week that for the first time its members had voted to set up a political fund (although not to affiliate to the Labour Party), says local government officers feel so threatened that this has increased membership. The teaching unions say the refusal of government to negotiate with them has forced them to put far more effort into local offices and legal advice in anticipation of the local and college based bargaining that will develop.

This squeezing of centralised, national collective bargaining is at the heart of what Bill Morris, national officer for the TGWU, calls "the new unionism". In 1985 the TGWU had a conference which decided not to recruit temporary workers hired through agencies such as Manpower. Last week, the TGWU signed an agreement with Manpower on rights for those once reviled temporary workers. It's the result of the "Link-Up" campaign which the TGWU launched last year, after a lot of thinking about the nature of tomorrow's labour force. It will be even more divided between core and peripheral workers. "Business unionism" recruits the upwardly mobile core — as male and white as they ever were — and neglects the sideways expanding periphery.

Organising the periphery means different recruitment methods and different ways of working. A group of contract cleaners will now be "targeted" by a TGWU "team of ladies". Link-Up means more work for lay members, more emphasis on legal services, more work for full-time officers on the spot (and possibly, as the Labour Party found, more disgruntlement from "core" members as officers are retrained about racial and sexual harassment.) So far, though, the members like it. The TGWU has been donating substantial sums to the homeless charity, Crisis at Christmas. One member wrote in this month's union journal: "I hope that Link-Up will carry on with the good work and as John Edmonds of the GMB put it recently 'become a civilising force in society'".

Bill and Ron at the TGWU may not be too pleased that it is a phrase of John Edmonds' which their member grasps to express his desire for the unions' moral hegemony. They can live with that. While they will look for any way to recruit members and secure their own union, they are as anxious to regain a moral and political role in tomorrow's Britain. And whatever reconciliations the TUC achieves this week, agreement on that role is as out of sight as ever.

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Clause 28: looking back at a future

One European country, Finland, has had laws against "encouraging homosexuality" for 17 years.

DUNCAN CAMPBELL ***reports on the censorship of arts and politics that is now in Finland's past, but may be Britain's future***

Helsinki

IT HAS BEEN illegal for 17 years to "promote homosexuality" in Finland. The special anti-gay law, worded very similarly to Britain's forthcoming Local Government Act*, even has a rather similar number — Section 20:9.2 of the Finnish penal code. Under this law, Finnish journalists, broadcasters, politicians and activists are prohibited from doing anything to "publicly encourage or induce" homosexuality — defined as "fornication (or indecent behaviour) between persons of the same sex". But it's not illegal to *be* gay or lesbian; the gay age of consent is 18 (16 for heterosexuals).

The Finnish anti-gay law very much reflects the mood and attitudes that prevailed in illiberal quarters in Britain in 1967, and which have arisen again since 1987. In essence, their view is that "very well, the buggers are legal now — but don't encourage them". Homosexuality as such became legal — but should never be seen to be acceptable or normal, and should not be visible to others. Finland legalised homosexual and lesbian relationships in 1971, four years after Britain decriminalised male homosexaulity — but the Finnish parliament gave in to right-wing demands that this explicitly be seen only as tolerance of highly private behaviour.

The penalty for a breach of Section 20:9.2 is six months imprisonment or a fine, or both. In a series of cases throughout the 1970s, the Finnish BBC, Yleisradio, was repeatedly threatened with prosecution if they gave any information at all about homosexuality.

The film *Sunday, Bloody Sunday* was banned from Finnish TV because it provided a "positive image" of homosexuals. (This, at least, was the view of the Finnish legal authorities at the time.)

A Yleisradio programme dealing with employment discrimination against gays was also claimed to be illegal, and criminal charges were brought against the station. Although the charges resulted in acquittals, broadcasters and journalists were warned by the directors of Yleisradio to "think carefully" before they said anything at all about homosexuality in future.

In 1976, a radio announcer on the minority Swedish language radio channel was disciplined for telling his audience that he had been officially forbidden to play love songs by Sweden's equivalent of Tom Robinson, gay singer Jan Hammarlund. The announcer was told that he was only permitted to play the most banal of Hammarlund's records, songs which had an unambiguous heterosexual context.

The radio announcer, Ulf Mansson, eventually resigned and is now a civil rights lawyer and leading activist in the gay/lesbian rights organisation, SETA (Sexual Liberation). Soon after this, a TV programme made by SETA about Finnish gays, part of a special four-part series on "minorities", was ruled illegal. It too was banned. After these cases, Finnish journalists took the government to the United Nations human rights committee, alleging a breach of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

> *"The early Finnish experience of anti-gay laws provides an unpleasant indication of what Britain could face in the future. To avoid "promoting" homosexuality, it would be illegal for anyone in public life to be identified as gay, except in a clearly negative context"*

Ridicule

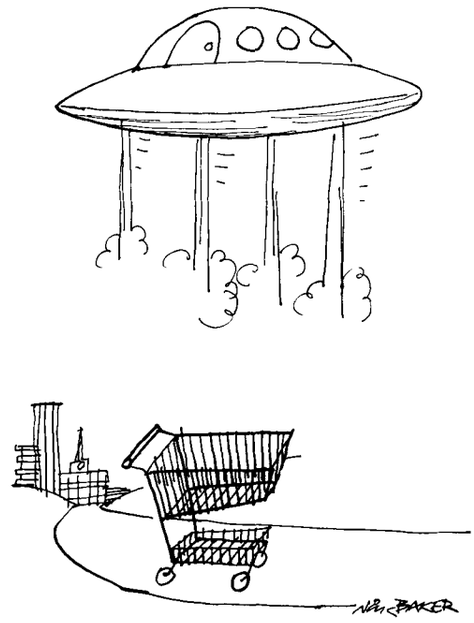
But the good news — for Finnish gays and lesbians, at least — is that the Finnish authorities nowadays behave much better than the law would suggest. From the earliest days of Section 20:9.2, leading lawyers pointed out how ridiculous it was to have a law make it illegal to encourage something that wasn't illegal. The United Nations case and demonstrations by members of SETA have helped bring the law into disrepute and disuse. In the early 1980s, 50 SETA members carried placards saying "We encourage homosexuality" on the annual Helsinki gay parade. The police forcibly removed the placards — but then the SETA group merely chanted the same slogan to passers by. All 50 then signed a legal statement of guilt under 20:9.2, and handed it to government prosecutors — along with a comprehensive medical, sociological and psychological dossier ridiculing the idea that anyone could be "encouraged" to be gay.

Government lawyers refused to prosecute the SETA 50 on the novel grounds that their disobedience to the law was merely "childish behaviour", and that they had "not understood" the meaning of the law. But since then Section 20:9.2 has been as unusable as the British Official Secrets Act. "It's a dead law now," says Olli Stalstrom, who helps run SETA and has written and had published the first ever Finnish books on being gay, and on Aids.

The TV stations which had once refused Peter Finch in *Sunday, Bloody Sunday* have since broadcast *My Beautiful Laundrette* — uncensored. Derek Jarman's films, such as *Caravaggio*, have toured Finnish cinemas, unadulterated. And the Aids crisis has meant that many programmes have been devoted to an open and factual view of homosexual life. SETA has been able to publish its monthly magazine unhindered for more than ten years.

Many of the other comparisons between Britain and Finland point to the underlying liberal nature of the Nordic countries and suggest that, perversely, gays can have an easier time in a colder climate. Gaybashing is uncommon, and police do not harass gay men in Helsinki parks or beaches. Gay videos on private sale have been tolerated. And the law has never, surprisingly, been argued to apply to gay pubs or clubs.

The early Finnish experience of anti-gay laws provides a remarkable and unpleasant indication of what Britain could face in the future, particularly if similar new clauses were to be attempted in such forthcoming legislation as the Broadcasting Bill: no media mention of homosexuality at all; a complete ban on all the gay press; and the prohibition of gay clubs and meeting places. Any singer or public performer whose output hinted that she or he were not fully heterosexual would lose their livelihood. To avoid "promoting" homosexuality, it would be illegal for anyone in public life to be identified as gay, unless this was in a clearly negative context such as committing suicide or suffering from Aids. After a grim decade of censorship, however, Finland has shown a rapid recovery of reason. Perhaps here too, the combination of ridicule in the streets and principled appeal to the international code of human rights might quickly leave the silly new law as discredited and unusable as Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act. That battle starts in June this year. □



* The number of the section has changed repeatedly as the Local Government bill is redrafted. At the moment, it is once again likely to be Section 28.

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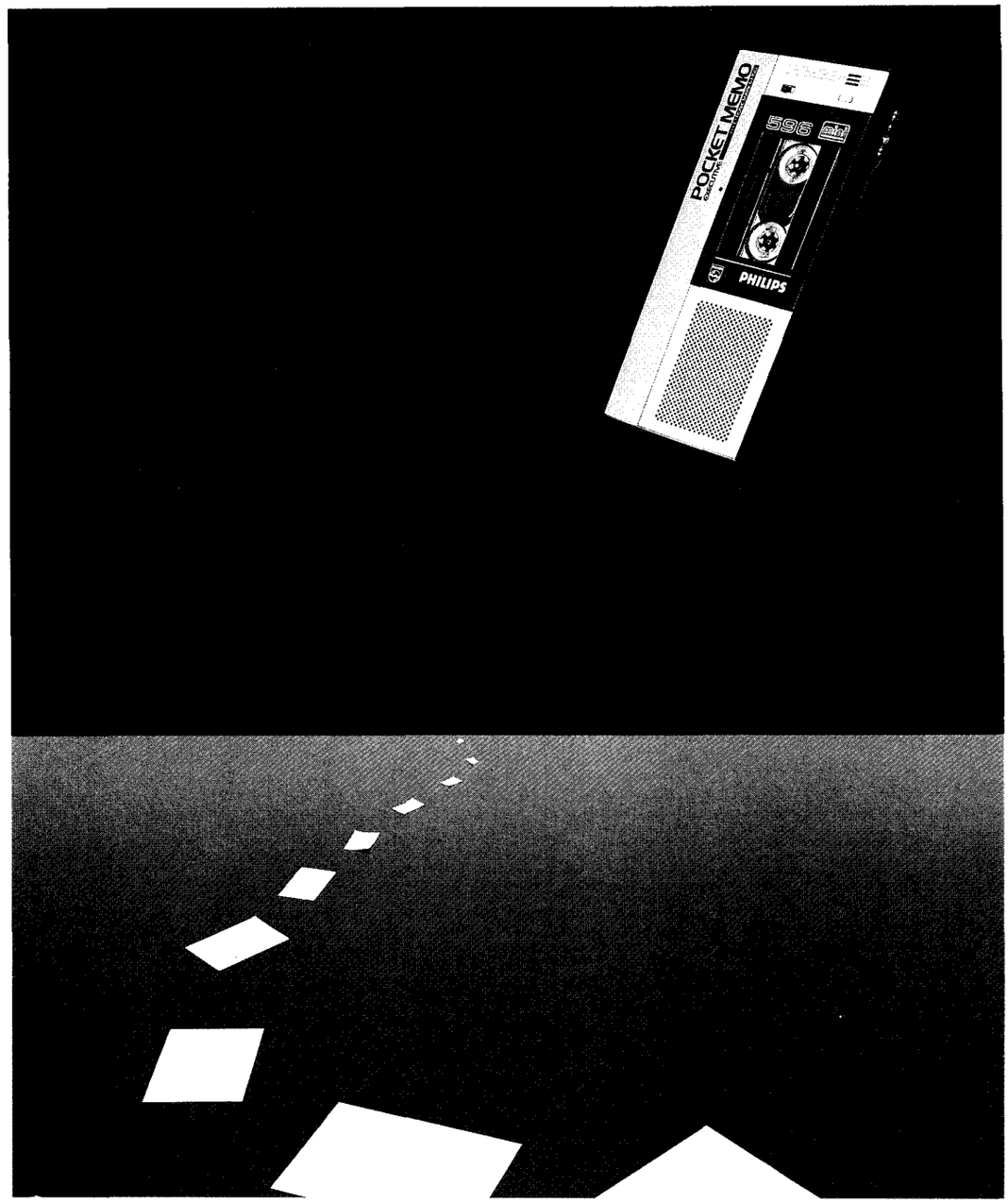

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The end of ideology

The pace of political change in China is now rivalling that of Gorbachev's reforms in the Soviet Union.
JONATHAN MIRSKY ***reports on the end of the Marx-Lenin-Mao Line***

Proponent of the mental dictatorship over the proletariat — now Mao is a tarnished icon

WHEN a staff member of the Chinese State Council said in the summer of 1979 "If it works we call it socialism, if it doesn't, we say it's capitalism", it seemed to me to fit his ironic view of life after decades of policy swings, one of which had swung him into ten years of "education under the jurisdiction of the masses", or hard labour in Mongolia.

Actually he didn't go far enough. Marxism-Leninism has been essentially written off in China, except for pious references — which are increasingly less pious — and only ideological die-hards, or "leftists" as they are dismissed nowadays, condemn capitalism. Class warfare, communal work, an angry capitalist proletariat on the verge of revolution, and the superiority of socialism in building production are now dead Maoist dodos, conceded to have crippled China's modernisation for decades.

In his keynote address to the 13th party congress in Peking on 25 October 1987, then premier, now party general secretary Zhao Ziyang struck deeply into the bleeding heart of Chinese-style Marxism. He laid out the new substitute which is intended to animate the 42 million party members as they strive towards the country's two primary goals: quadrupled production by the year 2000, and more or less full modernisation within 75 years. The concept is called "Initial Stage socialism".

As advanced by Zhao in October it claims that, since China never passed through a capitalist phase, and leapfrogged from feudalism into socialism, many of capitalism's useful contributions were never incorporated into the Chinese experience. This is the time to do so, Zhao insisted, and market forces, profit and loss, entrepreneurial initiative, getting rich, foreign investment, and most recently even something that sounds like traditional landlordism, are now not only acceptable but necessary.

There is no need to fear that these neo-capitalist phenomena will introduce capitalist values into China, the Zhao wing of the party insists, because exploitation and class warfare have vanished. Sometimes "spiritual pollution" in the form of corruption, pornography, or certain forms of dissent creep in through the Open Door, as opponents of the reforms miss no chance to observe, but so far the party is willing to pay the price, even when it means inflation, loss of foreign exchange, and frantic consumerism. But most centrally, the Initial Stage theory is the justification for practically anything that builds production, excluding — and this is the only exception, although a big one — challenges to the ultimate authority of the party itself. As Zhao Ziyang told British Trade Secretary Lord Young in Peking just before the October Congress, the Initial Stage theory is useful (if ideologically thin) because it stops foreigners from enquiring whether China is going capitalist.

When, oh when

Marxism-Leninism has little role to play in all this. China's leaders become vague when asked when communism is going to appear — even Deng Xiaoping pushes it off into an undefined future. As a doctrine it received a severe knock on 7 December 1984 when the *People's Daily*, the voice of the party, pointed out that Marxism could not solve China's problems. This caused such an international furore that within 24 hours the article had been "corrected" to read "*all* China's problems".

But that article gave us a cue. In 1986 Chinese newspapers carried numbers of articles suggesting that the party's unique role and position could be reconsidered. On 1 October, for instance, the newspaper supposedly favoured by intellectuals, *Guangming Daily*, noted: "It has long been assumed that the ideal for the Chinese people is the realisation of communism. This is a narrow-minded view that has frightened patriots who wanted to make a contribution to the country." Earlier, on 14 September, *Nanfang Daily* carried an article by a daring reformist political scientist, Yan Jiaqi, who stated that non-Marxist principles like the rule of law and the restriction of official power "are of great value to humanity's spiritual civilisation. Nor can we say that Marxism is superior to Humanism which holds that human nature and not class is the source of emotion and value."

Such suggestions were suddenly proscribed in January 1987, after the student demonstrations in many cities which Deng saw as expressions of "bourgeois liberal" demands, and an attack on party supremacy. Three of China's leading intellectuals were purged from the party (*NS* 9 January and 27 February 1987) for having written things which provoked students to demonstrate for "bourgeois" freedoms. In the late summer five

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more intellectuals were hauled over the party's coals for similar revisionist crimes; one of them was Su Shaozhi, the originator of the Initial Stage theory, which Zhao's think-tankers had adapted, who was dismissed as director of the Marxism-Leninism Mao Zedong Thought Institute for having discussed the lingering effects of Stalinism in the leadership.

But by the end of the year it was plain that Chinese intellectuals were not going to participate in savaging their colleagues. For 30 years, whenever there has been an anti-intellectual campaign, other intellectuals have climbed on the bandwagon to save their careers. The public, too, was sympathetic to those who had been purged, and even the top leadership, including ideological hard-liners, had no appetite for the traditional all-consuming purge, largely because most of them had experienced its effects during the Cultural Revolution.

After this brief set-back, and since last year's Congress, with most of China's leading conservatives out of the top positions, the demolition of Marxism-Leninism has resumed and last month gathered pace. On 15 February, the *Guangming Daily* admitted that Marx and Engels' prediction that capitalism was on the wane and socialism on the rise "did not conform to the facts". Because of communist China's own mistakes (past imperialism is no longer the whipping boy), such as neglecting to industralise agriculture, combining education with labour, and emphasising class struggle — essential Maoist policies — production had lagged. The *Guangming Daily* then gives a picture of life in advanced capitalist countries which might slightly embarrass even Mrs Thatcher: the working week is now only 31 hours and workers have four to six weeks holidays, a dream in China where three or four days off at the New Year is the norm. In its knockout punch to 60 years of party dogma, the paper observed that in the capitalist world the possibility of "violent revolution as a result of economic crises and the pauperisation of the proletariat as predicted by *The Communist Manifesto* has become very small".

On 29 February, the *Guangming Daily* continued its revisionism: because of the mistakes in Marx, Engels and Lenin, now was the time "to re-study capitalism". Lenin, the article pointed out, claimed that capitalism would soon vanish and that world wars between imperialist countries were inevitable, which was true in the 19th and early 20th centuries but not in the nuclear era.

Bourgeois transcendence

More daringly, *Guangming Daily* advised its readers that two bulwarks of modern capitalism — bourgeois law and democracy — had been improved, were no longer at odds with the interests of the working class, and had "*transcended the limits of time and space*". In Mao's day the notion that ideas transcended time and space, rather than expressing the value of certain classes, would have merited censure if not punishment. Up to now, democracy and law have been much praised in Deng Xiaoping's China, but only as tools of modernisation and efficiency, rather than as goods in themselves. Nowhere did the party suggest that democracy was a way for citizens to rule their governors; advising them was enough. Nor was the law to be the individual's shield in protecting his or her interests against those of the state; in China, where such a distinction between interests is rejected, the law is seen as the way to punish crimes without the arbitrariness of the Cultural Revolution and as a reassurance to foreign investors that contracts will be honoured.

The articles on Marxism in the *Guangming Daily* will attract attention among Chinese intellectuals. Their initial reaction, as always with anything that looks like an ideological relaxation, will be caution; too often, as classically with the Hundred Flowers of 1956-57, loosening up is succeeded, abruptly, by a crackdown. But signs of a real change of direction can be discerned in the area of literature and art. There, in 1942, Mao Zedong set down guidelines which remained in force for more than 40 years: legitimate art and literature serve the party, blackening the pre-revolutionary past, hailing the future, and creating characters and themes devoid of ambiguity and providing positive and negative models for action. Time and again since 1942 — seven years before the Communist victory — writers deemed to have violated these canons have been disciplined, imprisoned for years and decades, and sometimes executed.

Ying Ruocheng, China's deputy minister of culture, insists that Mao's *dicta* rested on a misreading of Lenin. In London recently for the first night of *The Last Emperor* in which he stars (he is China's leading male actor), Ying said that Lenin insisted on tight control only in the party's own publications, not in art and literature as a whole. It was Stalinism which infected Mao, Ying suggested: "Mao and those around him treated those ideas on literature and art like dogma, to make their followers obedient. They wanted a mental dictatorship and for them this fake Leninism was a godsend. It did a lot of harm. If Mao had only kept out of cultural affairs after 1953 — and for that matter out of the economy, too — he would have been a much greater man."

Deputy minister Ying emphasises that neither he (who spent three years in rural exile during the Cultural Revolution) nor his minister, the author Wang Meng (purged for more than 20 years in 1957), would ever ban a book, play, picture or film; nor would Ying ever imprison their creators, although he would, discreetly, warn them against publishing anything in which a character shouted "Down with the party".

He says: "I can't think of any author who has been banned in the past whom we would ban today. Take the writer Zhou Zoren — he was a Japanese collaborator and we're going to publish him because we think he has academic and artistic value."

Ying states emphatically that last year's anti-bourgeois-liberal campaign was a disaster. "Apart from blatant — and I mean blatant — calls to overthrow the party, I think characters in plays and novels can criticise the party and they don't have to be portrayed as stupid or bad. I introduced *Amadeus* to China. Who cares about the ideology of the Austrian emperor in that play? What really fascinated audiences was the character of Salieri. They said 'My God, that play could have been written for China. We have a Salieri in our office.'"

This is what the *Guangming Daily* meant when it described certain bourgeois values as "transcending time and space". In China this is a revolutionary notion; it has been advanced before, by intellectuals who were accordingly "smashed" as "class enemies" — but now the reforming wing of the party endorses it. The millennium will have arrived when such an endorsement is no longer required. □

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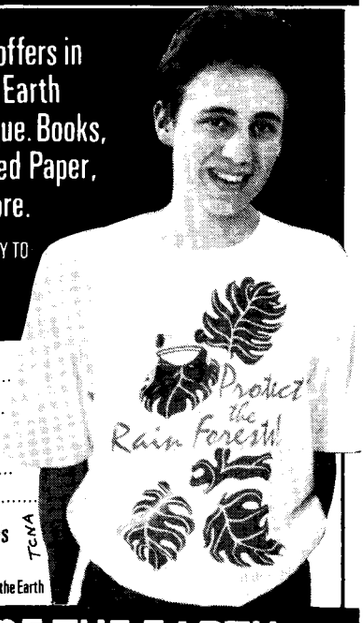

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Books

Cuban emigrees to Miami sit on the beach and wave the flag, waiting to return to Havana and take it by force

Camera Press

When things fall apart

As flower power fused, **JOAN DIDION** *explored the murk with* Slouching towards Bethlehem. *Now, her latest book of reportage, published in Britain this week, shines a fiercer, more manic light on US disintegration as it's happening in Miami.* **ADRIANNE BLUE** *reports on the town and the book*

MY PARENTS MOVED from Washington DC to a snobbish little Florida town not 50 miles from Miami. They were looking for serenity. Too many knife fights and murders in DC; too many robberies and drugs. They found a house near a lake with a banyan tree in front and a couple of orange trees in the back.

One morning a helicopter landed on the lawn and half a dozen policemen with pistols and rifles and walky-talkies fanned out along the back garden looking, they said, for a burglar. When, as my mother wondered aloud, had Florida "burglars" turned so terrifyingly dangerous as to warrant all that? The answer was 1980, when thousands of Cubans whom Castro didn't want, many of them let out of the jails, arrived in Miami. These were the Mariels. Not common criminals; they had a political mission.

One Sunday when I was there, Miami cops killed an unarmed man who had just paid $15 for a snort of cocaine. That was before Gibraltar, when we could still be shocked by shooting unarmed suspects: in police parlance, "perpetrators".

There was real fear in my mother's voice when I spoke of driving through Miami. Too many murders and robberies and drugs. Nothing but Cubans there she said. They all have knives.

She was wrong; some of them had guns and bombs and CIA incentive pay. In **Miami** (Weidenfeld, £12.95), Joan Didion deciphers the gobbledygook: the strange tales (some of them true) told about and by these anti-Castro Cuban emigrees, some who arrived three decades ago and who now run Miami but still dream the impossible dream of returning to take Havana by force.

Didion thoroughly examines their Washington connections too. She talks to clean cut Anglo men in my hometown who plot assassinations in Cuba or Costa Rica. They have and they don't have President Reagan's imprimateur. They have an odd political vocabulary: one mooted political murder was billed as "George Bush's baby". The bizarre facts don't add up. That's the point, one of the points, of this engrossing, enlightening and important book.

IN A LIMOUSINE in London Joan Didion once told me that she mistrusts the chief tool of a reporter's trade: talk. "You interview somebody who is a public figure, and the answers you get, they're set answers. You've heard them before. You've read them before. And when you're interviewing somebody who isn't a public figure, they don't know what they think that much. I mean, I think people reveal themselves in other ways."

By violence, by what they choose to destroy. In

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Miami the crazy dreamers — some rich, some poor, all driven — kill their enemies, their imagined enemies, their enemies' enemies, ultimately their own sad, idiotic cause. There are no palm trees or safe beaches in *Miami*. Just safe houses and psychological hurricanes.

The notion that American society resembles a madhouse is a commonplace of contemporary letters. Perhaps we ought to pause and gulp over that one. Perhaps it is too late. To understand it, to understand America, which is in many ways the British future, I don't recommend *Lake Wobegon* or the Tom Wolfian vanities of New York City. I recommend *Miami*, Didionville. In her first book of reportage, *Slouching towards Bethlehem*, Joan Didion bore witness to the decline of flower power in California in the 1960s, painstakingly piling detail upon detail to show that the inane actions of inane people have horrible consequences. In other words, carelessness kills: babies, husbands, political movements, passers-by. To my mind, fascinating though the often terrible facts were, typical though they were of America, that analysis missed the point of the 1960s.

But in *Miami* she is spot on. Miami *is* crazy. The dream of a Havana nirvana has no redeeming value.

And, unlike California, as Didion shows in relentless detail, these right-wing revolutionaries in Miami and in Washington have plenty of malice aforethought. Three decades on, the veterans of that bloody fiasco, the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, insist on freezing their sense of possibilities. Invasion, *si*; dialogue, *no*.

Little annoyances: a female Hispanic department store clerk refuses to ring up the sale when the name on the plastic charge card belongs to the wrong political faction. No one depicts place or passion or dislocation with more accuracy; no one can move us more deeply with the staccato repetition of the crazy facts of personal-political life than Joan Didion.

Didion's fictional heroines experience the chaos which in her documentary accounts the reporter Didion uneasily holds up at arms length for us to regard and see. In her early novel, *Play It as It Lays* (1970), as the pace of Maria's life quickens, splice, splice, splice, her heroine's nerves become frazzled, then numb. Seven years on, in the exquisitely controlled novel *A Book of Common Payer*, another woman disintegrates, her mental landscapes reflecting the real life revolution she happens on it Latin America. In *Miami* the method is remarkably similar. Didion cuts from one scene (or astounding detail) to another, without apparent connection, without comment, the juxtaposition conveying this world's frantic, laughable, dangerous dislocation.

The centre isn't holding. In these men who yearn to invade Havana we see Yeats' beast that "slouches towards Bethlehem". The left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing; or, if it does, it is practising a sleight of hand; or the left hand is hiding behind its back and the right hand is a fist; or the right hand — call it Washington — is cutting off the left hand — the Cuban emigrees — while pretending to be shaking its hand. In *Miami*, Joan Didion deconstructs the social reality and finds it is bonkers. We find out how and why. We find out what my mother only suspects about Miami. This book will make you think twice before you fly off to bake in the Florida sun. □

CENSORSHIP

Free as a fish

Terry Eagleton

The Velvet Prison: Artists Under State Socialism
MIKLOS HARASZTI *I.B. Tauris* £10.95

THERE ARE TWO major Western images of the situation of the artist within the Soviet bloc. The dominant view sees the artist as a potential dissident, censored and hounded by a philistine bureaucracy and crippled in his or her free expression. A minority case puts this image down to Western capitalist propaganda, arguing that the Eastern bloc artist has at least exchanged the social futility of his or her Western counterpart for some fruitful function within society as a whole.

This devastatingly shrewd, neatly aphoristic study by the hounded, censored editor of the journal of Hungary's democratic opposition devisively rejects both these images. Heavy-handed censorship happens in Eastern Europe, Haraszti claims, but it is increasingly a thing of the past. Why suppress artists who are eager to accommodate themselves to Soviet reality, keen to discern an identity of interests between themselves and the state?

The true situation, in short, is not one of naked coercion, but of what Antonio Gramsci called "hegemony": the complex process by which the ruled negotiate some free space for themselves within a canny conformism to power, and by which that power emerges strengthened and renewed from its apparent tolerance. The ideology of censorship, so Haraszti argues, has learned to speak the language of the censored; and such censorship is not the simple oppressor of cultural producers, but their natural home. Persecuted artists exist, in a sense; but they are not quite as unhappy as they are made out to be.

Like anyone else, artists need to know where they are, to learn the rules of the game (whether of Eastern bureaucracy or Western market) and to come to feel at home within it. Take away such discipline, Haraszti comments with casual pessimism, "and soon we will hunger for it because we are unable to create without it".

Eastern bloc writers and intellectuals, so the case runs, are accomplices in their own oppression and exploitation; an earlier generation of them espoused the revolution with alacrity, since it promised to give their art some point, and thus paved the way for their successors' "nationalisation". If the state restricts artists it also guarantees them a public, lays on the networks without which they couldn't operate, generates massive financial support. The only difference from the West is that there "the artist is free to resign and go to another company".

A "soft aesthetics" rules in the East, which permits artists a modest degree of formal experimentalism as long as their work remains reasonably public and non-self-referential; the Romantic individualist dissident is either a throw-back or a thorn in the flesh of his or her colleagues, threatening to subvert their wary solidarity with the state. "Our work," Haraszti remarks in typically wry style, "is even allowed to be fantastic, provided that we remain within the gravitational pull of socialist realism and equip ourselves with the ideological parachute necessary for a smooth landing in the unlikely event of a crash."

What Haraszti has written, though he doubtless wouldn't recognise it, is a study of Soviet bloc artists along the lines of Michel Foucault's darkly pessimistic analyses of the mutual complicity between power and its victims. As such, his book demystifies with steely realism the more self-congratulatory Western liberal dogmas of an Eastern bloc in the throes of brutal Stalinist repression, without for a moment throwing a crumb of comfort to starry-eyed fellow travellers. It is all summed up in one of his corruscating images: "Under Stalinism, our plight was like that of the fish whose owner foolishly locked the aquarium in fear of its escape. Since Stalinism, the owner has become wiser and the fish happier. The aquarium remains the same." □

FICTION

Single cream

Alan Bold

A Far Cry from Kensington
MURIEL SPARK *Constable* £9.95

MURIEL SPARK, at 70, is established as one of the finest prose stylists of the century. Drawing on such diverse sources as the supernaturalism of the Scottish ballads, the structural complexity of Emily Brontë and the irony of Evelyn Waugh, she has created an idion of her own. For her, nothing human is sacred: she confronts the reader with the sustained paradox that life is a ridiculous imitation of art.

The life led by Spark in Kensington in the 1950s provided, or so she suggested in *Loitering With Intent*, "the staws from which I have made my bricks".

Since Spark's novels play formal games with the nature of fictional truth, actual events are always imaginatively recreated: think of the phrase "the transformation of the commonplace" in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. Nevertheless (to use one of her favourite words) the thematic territory explored in her new novel has a factual basis that will be familiar to readers of her first, *The Comforters*, as well as to readers of *Loitering*.

Spark left London in 1962 mainly because fame and fortune had separated her from her former friends. "I felt like a sort of reproach to them," she has said, "and they to me." Judging from her books, her circle contained a fair number of charlatans; although she looks back with affection on London in her fiction, her wicked wit makes fun of spiritualists, literary frauds, forgers, emotional and criminal blackmailers. The new book takes a bitter-sweet revenge on such people.

A Far Cry from Kensington is the third novel that Spark has told in the first person. Whereas *Robinson* and *Loitering* were narrated by obviously autobiographical heroines, *A Far Cry* is supposedly the work of an amusingly opinionated woman utterly unlike the author. Nancy Hawkins

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is naive and narrow-minded; she frequently interrupts the narrative to give homely advice on such subjects as dieting ("eat and drink the same as always, only half") and marriage ("first see the other partner when drunk"). Her phrase, "it is my advice", runs like a refrain through the text.

In the interests of satire, Spark renders the secondary characters as caricatures: the hysterical Polish Catholic on talking terms with God; the cockney nurse obsessed by cleanliness. Yet the novelist Emma Loy (a Sparkian figure) is lovingly delineated and praised for her technique of "ferreting out facts and juxtaposing them with inventions". Similarly, Spark establishes the situation of her story with great precision, for her various plotters need the security of a plausible, if bizarre, plot. Spark's strength is to combine a surrealistic mood with a realistic tone.

The year is 1954 and the narrator, Mrs Hawkins, is a war-widow of 28 living in furnished rooms in South Kensington. Like many of Spark's most compelling characters, Mrs Hawkins verges on the grotesque. "I was massive in size," she declares, "strong-muscled, huge bosomed, with wide hips, hefty long legs, a bulging belly and fat backside." Clearly she is one of Spark's comforters. So fat she looks permanently pregnant, she is regarded by the other tenants of the rooming-house as a massive maternal presence, expansive with her advice. Seemingly unshakeable, it is Mrs Hawkins' misfortune to live and work with eccentrics and neurotics. Away from the rooming-house and South Kensington, she works in the West End for a publisher, Martin York, who totters on the brink of bankruptcy.

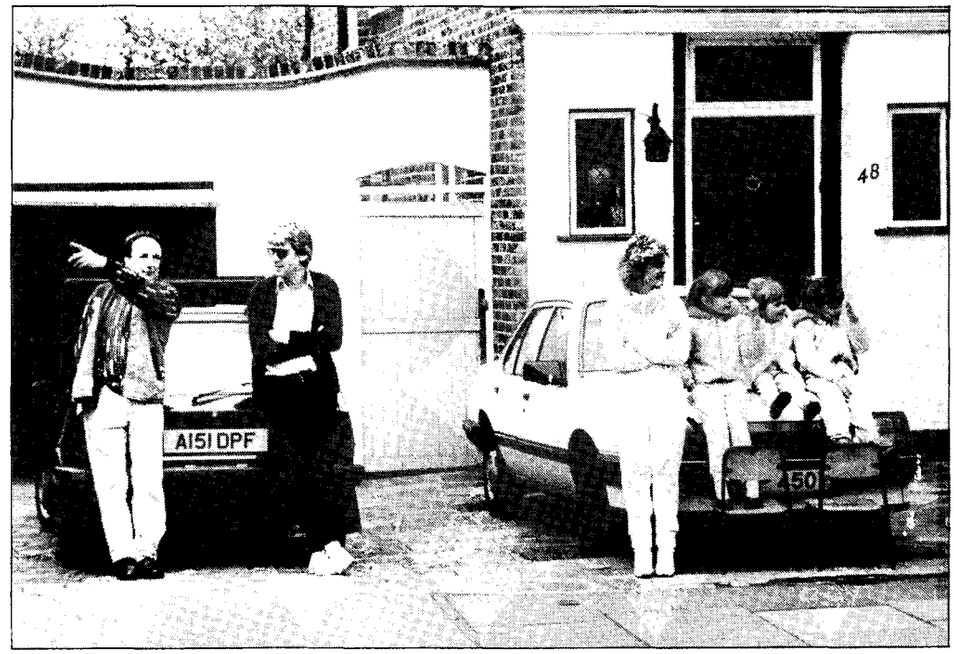
Mrs Hawkins is surrounded, indeed, by the chatter and clatter of domestic and commercial affairs. Telling her tale in flashback she reserves her passages of lyrical prose for the silence that sustained her through sleepless nights. "I heard the silence," she says. "The silence was actual, it was beautiful to my ears."

During the novel, her ears are further assaulted by the crude sounds coming from the villain, hack-writer Hector Bartlett.

With "a small but full baby-mouth as if forever asking to suck a dummy tit" Bartlett puts several schemes in motion, all of them calculated to bring ruin on others. In a conventional novel, such material would be stretched into a comfortable shape, but Spark teases it into surprising patterns, inviting the reader to admire her inventive skill. As a literary performance, the book is distinguished by comic creation and artistic energy. Spark has never allowed her repertoire to become a predictable routine.

"If I could write like . . . Muriel Spark," Agatha Christie acknowledged in her autobiography, "I should jump to high heaven with delight." The connoisseur of Spark's style will understand the tribute. *A Far Cry* is not as outstanding as *Jean Brodie*, but that novel remains Spark's *chef d'oeuvre*, one of the authentic classics of modern fiction. The new novel is superior to the last one, *The Only Problem*, and of comparable quality to *The Comforters* and *Loitering* — which is to say that it's a dazzling fiction by a writer touched by genius. □

Alan Bold's Muriel Spark *was published in 1986 by Methuen.*



Nice kids, nice cars, nice clothes, nice paving-stones, nice gesture . . . Petts Wood paradise

LAWNMOWERS

Down their way

Nigel Fountain

Nattering in Paradise: A Word from the Suburbs
DANIEL MEADOWS with additional interviews by SARA TIBBETTS *Simon & Schuster* £12.95

OK, let's assume I'm not the reviewer. I'm some bloke who's strayed on to the page to tell you about the reviewer. He'll be with you in a minute, when I've got my friend to set up the cassette recorder, to tape his comments. I'll transcribe them, rewrite them, send them back to him for his approval and offer him anonymity. If he was one of the Natterers in Paradise I might have photographed his offspring breakdancing outside his garage. Now, like Daniel Meadows, I'm in italics to lead you along, show you I'm not the subject, and it's more discreet isn't it? Like I'm whispering in your ear. As with Meadows I'm not trying to be objective, but I'm not stepping too far out of line either.

I never really lived in Suburbia. I grew up near the middle of — well, let's call it The Town. Meadows calls his place The Borough, where he talks to "the comfortably well-off in Thatcher's Britain", south-east of London. He doesn't say where it is, but among the photographs is one of some commuters showing every sign of post-industrial alienation legging it out of Petts Wood BR station, so I've got my suspicions. A lot of them buy, or want what he sometimes calls CARS. I think he is referring to BMWs, but we want to spare fancy foreign motors their blushes too, don't we? Right. And we're not here to sell houses either, so when Barry and Jean — they're very keen on DIY, going on for seven pages about it — talk about "Boot's houses" I don't say Boot's, I think Bovis. Just a joke. I come from a Conservative family myself, I went to a grammar school like Pete Morgan who came to Petts . . . The Borough with his wife Kathy. Pete drives a Granada and works in hotels. His old school's gone private. That sticks in his gullet. So has mine; I'm choked too Pete.

The Reviewer wandered through Nattering In Paradise *meeting all sorts. Simon Jankins the estate agent seemed a bit of a pinko, ex-Army, well, not so much* pink *just exasperated with what he calls the "politics of envy"; Sally Timpson who lives in a private estate and holidays a lot in her Majorca villa; Mary Cadogan the nice writer; Angela who got married to a bad lot called Kenny. Did you like them?*

Well, it's difficult to say isn't it? It takes all sorts doesn't it? I mean if you're looking for a bunch of raving fascists then *NiP* is the wrong place to go. I'd try the Paraguayan Riviera if I was you. No, some of them warmed the cockles of my heart and some — pardon my French — were right Bs. But it was the same at my school. You meet good and bad in all walks of life. A lot of people at my school wanted to be vets actually, or that's how I remember it. Not that I've got anything against vets. They put our cat to sleep.

Are there vets in the book?

Now you come to mention it, no. No, there aren't any vets. But I'm sure that vets do very well in *NiP*. Doctors, ex-nurses, big bangers, civil servants, journalists, travel agents they all do well. And other people are trying to do well, having a house helps. A lot of people mean well, they know about poverty, some still suffer it, and a lot *did* experience poverty.

What do they experience now?

I'm not sure. The kids experience a desire to make loads of money, one of them wants to bunk off to California. I could understand that. If you're going to live in Suburbia you might as well go the whole hog. Some adults experience the Kentish

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Men's Association, some the National Women's Cancer Control Campaign. Some do some bloody good things. I'm sure all of them experience the same as me in Finsbury Park only different. If you prick me, do I not bleed? as the Bard used to say.

But it doesn't tease out the contradictions?

No, and Meadows would wash his mouth out before using language like that. I don't want to be rude, but could you shove off? And take your bloody tape recorder and camera with you.

There's no need to be offensive. Studs Terkel did alright with his.

Yeah, but there's a direction in Terkel. Meadows calls his book an "entertainment of a gentle kind"; it really begins to get you down after 189 pages. It was like that *Hancock's Half Hour* the Sunday afternoon when nothing happened and the neighbour came round and did his animal impersonations and they couldn't be bothered to go to the pub. In 2088 it'll probably be invaluable archaeology of Thatcherism. Meanwhile I'm sure Bryan Gould could use a copy. □

REVOLUTION

Despatches

Elizabeth Wilson

Larissa Reisner
CATHY PORTER *Virago* £5.50

WHEN I TOLD a friend I was reading a life of Larissa Reisner, the response was terse: "*Who*?" For Larissa Reisner, "a model for the future, and of the 'new Soviet woman'" during and immediately after her short life, has become a neglected figure in the Soviet Union and, unlike Alexandra Kollontai, has not been rediscovered by contemporary western feminists. I hope that Cathy Porter's biography changes that.

Born in 1895, Larissa Reisner came from a cultivated, upper-class family in which socialism and women's rights were accepted without question. From her earliest childhood her parents were involved in the workers' struggle. Larissa began to write poetry in her teens and became deeply involved with the radical and experimental circle of writers in St Petersburg in the years just before the Revolution. In 1915 she began editing a periodical to which she also contributed poems and political articles. After the 1917 Revolution she joined the Bolshevik Party (as did many women). By 1918 she was married to a working-class Bolshevik naval commander and, together and apart, they were for the next two years engaged in fighting the Civil War in the eastern Soviet Union.

Larissa fought, reconnoitred and marched alongside the ordinary soldiers and sailors, yet this did not prevent her from writing prolific despatches from the front, later gathered into a book. Her life at this time, with its adventures and narrow escapes, is amazingly dramatic: the narrative races along; I haven't read such an exciting non-fiction book for ages. Cathy Porter brings vividly to life the full dangers of the Civil War and does a brilliant job of summarising and clarifying the main events of the whole epoch.

Within three years Larissa's life had undergone a further evolution: she and her husband were posted to Kabul in order to try to negotiate a settlement in Afghanistan (where British interests were still entrenched.) Here, Larissa became friendly with the ruler's female entourage in the harem, although her work with these women was perhaps, Cathy Porter suggests, insufficiently valued or not recognised by her male colleagues. At this period she was surrounded by the beauties of nature and of oriental cities and gardens, yet rather stifled by them, even as the rich imagery drawn from nature (and in part a legacy of the Symbolist poets who so deeply influenced her) at times almost overpowered her writing.

Her marriage ended; she was sent by the Soviet government to link up with the Bolsheviks in Germany and work among the proletariat; and it was here, in her reports on the life of the poor and her descriptions of the great inflation at the beginning of the Weimar Republic, that her prose style was finally divested of its embellishments and her writing made its most significant impact. During this period she was intimate with Karl Radek — an admirer of Trotsky, who died in prison in the 1930s — but he was married and she never again lived in a domestic relationship with a man. Nor did she have any children, although on her return from Berlin she travelled to the Urals and there adopted an abandoned boy of twelve.

At the end of 1925 her relationship with Radek was apparently collapsing. She was full of plans for writing and travel, yet the recurrent attacks of malaria from which she had been suffering since the Civil War were cumulatively draining her energy and, at the beginning of 1926, she suddenly contracted typhus and died.

An inspirational revolutionary, she is movingly brought to life in this wonderful and sensitive biography. On one point, however, I found Cathy Porter over-defensive: she points out that Larissa Reisner does not conform to the contemporary feminist ideal since "her self-determination as a woman may often seem in conflict with her own personal needs, her sense of identity and her sexuality". She did not make work with women her priority, nor did women (with one or two exceptions) play a central role in her life. Western feminists, however, cannot set up their own perspective as some ahistorical touchstone against which all other women's struggles are to be judged. What I take from this book is not that her immersion in and loyalty to the Revolution was "wrong" or necessarily self-neglectful, for the circumstances in which we find ourselves *do* determine our actions to a large extent, but that, just as our feminism can deepen our sympathy for her unspoken difficulties with men, so can her heroism put our difficulties into a new perspective.

Gifted and beautiful, her time cut tragically short, Reisner is also a deeply romantic figure. Her life seems larger than life, even an exaggeration. But those *were* heroic and in a deep sense optimistic days, and I shall remember above all her vitality and her hopefulness, her undimmed sense of life: "How extraordinary to be alive in this world!" □

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PUBLISHING

The good, the bad and the lead title

We've asked a cross-section of the most interesting British publishers for their views on the state of the industry: the threats, the positive trends, the names to watch. The threats, not surprisingly, massively outweigh any positive signs — indeed quite a few publishers couldn't find anything at all to celebrate, apart from their own lists. Only Methuen canvassed a variety of opinions, from their managing director, drama, non-fiction and fiction editors respectively. In other cases the respondents are either directors or senior editors — not yet their accountants

The greatest threat to British publishing

Chatto & Windus (Carmen Callil) I've racked my brain for threats to British publishing but can come up with nothing new: threats, if such there be, are the same ones which have afflicted the written word since Caxton.

Verso (Colin Robinson) So many candidates: the rapid monopolisation of the industry by multinationals; Clause 29; the core curriculum and the ending of university tenure; the cuts in local authority spending. Behind all this is an accelerating drive to narrow the range of ideas in British culture through the philistinism of the free market and the intolerance of Victorian values.

The concentration of publishing into massive US and European conglomerates is likely to continue this side of another crash. When declining literacy in the third world and education in the west limit the market, the only way for companies to grow is through takeovers. Ability to read balance sheets rather than books will be an increasingly important boardroom ticket; authors and employees will continue to be treated like cattle as companies are bought and merged, and cultural and political differences will be ignored in pursuit of a global common denominator, "the world book".

The Women's Press (Ros de Lanerolle) VAT is a threat, particularly as it in turn threatens the net book agreement (which really does protect small booksellers); but I guess the biggest hazard must be the growing trend towards megapublishing and megadistribution. We already have more and more publishers taken over by bigger publishers, in turn taken over by US publishers; and, at the other end of the process, mergers and takeovers among wholesalers, distributors and bookshop chains.

These trends encourage competition for "commercial" books, hype for "big" titles (obscuring the rest) and pressure for higher and higher discounts. Are we now to expect more financial links between wholesalers and publishers, such as already exist in the US? And between book publishers, newspaper publishers and TV companies? (Murdoch already has interests in all these sectors.) Small and independent publishers are thus being squeezed at both ends of the process. Of course this has always been so. But there are now fewer independent publishers than at any time in the past 40 years.

Secker & Warburg (Max Eilenberg) The destabilising effect of constant takeovers and mergers both on staff morale and on the crucial author/editor relationship. The loss of imprint integrity and individuality within the corporate whole. The growing influence of accountants in dictating publishing practice.

Serpent's Tail (Peter Ayrton) The declining role of books/literature in that part of British culture that is innovative and experimental.

Virago (Ursula Owen) Clause 29, library cuts, bland international publishers pushing good books aside, newspapers having no guts. Bad trends: crazy advances which won't be earned back; the yuppification of feminism.

Heinemann (Dan Franklin) The possible imposition of VAT on books: it will hurt everyone.

Carcanet (Michael Schmidt) British publishing's own over-production in terms of title output and also the homogenisation of lists which occur when editors play musical chairs and lists which in the past had a very distinctive character come to resemble one another more and more. This has little to do with takeovers and more to do with the morality of editors who no longer see commitment to a single imprint and a "stable" of authors as sufficiently satisfying.

Negative trends: The end of the "general reader" (if he or she ever existed as I believe he or she did) results in not only the targeting of the market but the tailoring of the product for the market. It seems likely, too, that marketing on the strength of personality and topicality will continue to distort the reception of writers less willing to commit themselves to the promotion of their work. It has to be said that the failure of discriminating reviewing across a whole range of areas and titles impoverishes serious readers and has to some extent contributed to the decline of the general reader.

Methuen (Geoffrey Strachan) The belief in financial circles that there's a lot of money to be made from investing in publishing. This puts terrible pressure on the houses they finance. (Nick Hern) Illiteracy. (Ann Mansbridge) VAT on books. Huge prices paid for unworthy titles. (Elsbeth Lindner) Big-bookism. Negative trends (as distinct from threats) also include over-hyed literary novels, and post-feminism.

Hamish Hamilton (Christopher Sinclair-Stevenson) I am tempted to say that chequebook publishing poses the greatest threat, mainly because a few large and rich publishing houses feel that money is the be all and end all, thus concentrating on a handful of commercial writers at the expense of a great number of young, more literary, more interesting writers. However I will opt instead for the threatened imposition of VAT on books, a philistine and retrograde step with severe implications.

GMP (Aubrey Walter) Rising costs of raw materials. Paper is becoming ever more expensive as more and more of the planet's boreal forests are being used up. Recycling is the one hope here, but in Britain we need to follow the example of the Netherlands. As Britain's and the world's leading gay male publishers, of course we are deeply concerned at the worrying trend of gay-bashing spearheaded by the provincial, moralistic hard right here in backwater Britain (thank Goddess we are in Europe where attitudes on sexuality tend to be light years ahead — probably due to the Code Napoleon). However the mass intelligentsia (some of whom are our market) will resist this and it is to be hoped that this is a short-lived threat.

Encouraging new trends

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back originals are selling and will, sooner or later, be reviewed as new fiction by mainstream literary editors.

Virago More translated fiction; more awareness that Britain isn't the centre of the world; publishers getting behind fewer books rather than publishing more to make turnover; high advances for good writers.

Chatto & Windus The search for a new generation of literary novelists: the last batch are now nearing, or well into, their forties and it's time for a younger one. Books will look better and better as book buyers continue to live in a design-conscious world — hence the great success of Waterstones. I think there will be fewer packaged books and that we will demand of our writers of general non-fiction that they write as well as our biographers and novelists.

Methuen (GS) The key note is diversity: user-friendly packaging. (NH) Conglomerates. (AM) If I knew, I wouldn't be informing the competition. (EL) Improved cover design, growth of quality bookshops that stay open late.

Carcanet Authors, quite rightly, are expecting more sophisticated and more dedicated treatment from their publishers. Production and marketing techniques must, therefore, become both more flexible and more energetic. I hope that packagers, almost without exception a wholly negative influence, will vanish. There will be an increasing emphasis on trade paperbacks. The literary biography will have something of a revival. The travel book market will diminish, though the best practitioners of that genre will not suffer. Though all publishers will accept that far too many books are published, few will do anything about it. The indifferently written blockbuster novel, the second-rate biography, the unnecessary coffee-table book — all these will become increasingly difficult to publish.

GMP There's a healthy demand for all types of books reflecting a gay awareness — fiction, photography, painting and drawing, memoirs. Gay men are discerning book buyers — books must reflect current styles of packaging. As a press we're always conscious of street style and male haute couture and its spin-offs.

The Women's Press We're using our ingenuity to find new ideas, both in publishing and in marketing: we've encouraged our authors, for instance, to take genre fiction and "play" with it, adding politics, and pure fun: feminist science fiction, Women's Press Crime, Livewire books for teenagers. . .

Authors to look out for

Serpent's Tail A new generation of Italian writers: Busi, Palandri, Celati, Tabucchi, Balestrini, Del Giudice — who with verve and intelligence are marrying the formal innovations of Calvino to a literary assessment of the (political) traumas of the "years of lead" [i.e. the middle and late 1970s]. London writers like Kate Pullinger and The Quick End who in their fiction give us a nervous and on-the-edge city which will be recognisable to a younger generation of readers and is a far cry from the MOR cultural stereotypes of Kensington and Hampstead and closer to Kelman's Glasgow or Goytisolo's Paris. See also the Serpent's Tail catalogue.

Virago Among our authors to be watched in '88: Pat Barker with a new novel *The Man Who Wasn't There*; Lucy Ellmann with her touching first novel *Sweet Desserts*; Aritha van Herk's novel *No Fixed Address*; Maya Angelou's *Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'Fore I Diiie* (poetry published to celebate her sixtieth birthday); Bea Campbell's *Child Abuse*; Susan Berris's teenage novel, *Nell's Quilt*.

Heinemann From our own list I'd pick Roddy Doyle, the brilliant young author of *The Commitments*, whose play *Brownbread* is still the talk of Dublin; James Hall, whose *Under Cover of Daylight* is one of the meanest and most tightly written thrillers I've ever read; Ken Russell, who is in the process of delivering to me a superb autobiography; and Jay Stevens, whose *Storming Heaven: LSD and the American Dream* is a marvellously detailed and funny work of social history.

Carcanet I can only answer by referring you to the Carcanet catalogue! At least in the area of poetry. In fiction, I can do no better than recommend the Collins Harvill catalogue. That and what was the Methuen general list strike me as the leading publishers of contemporary fiction and fiction in translation.

Chatto & Windus I shall confine my recommendations to "foreigners" on our list. Anthony Sher's first novel *Middlepost* tells us more about how South Africa came into being than any work of non-fiction could; for entertainment watch out for Irish/Australian/American William Coyle's *Act of Grace*, which is the sleeper of the year, and Masako Togawa, the night club singer who is the Ruth Rendell of Japan. Plus first translations of important writers from Italy and Spain: Antonio Tabucchi's *Little Misunderstandings of No Importance* and Alvaro Pombo's *The Hero of the Big House*.

Methuen (GS) Methuen authors. (NH) Peter Brook. Because we're publishing him! (AM) Mark Salzman (EL) Nawal El Saadawi, Zoë Fairbairns, Michèle Roberts, Julia Voznesenskaya.

Hamish Hamilton I have to be personal here. A.N. Wilson will demonstrate, both with a magisterial biography of Tolstoy and with a serious and impressive new novel, that he is not merely the gadfly which others — and often he himself — like to conjure up. Redmond O'Hanlon will show that he can write a superb travel book without the comic intervention of James Fenton; and Paul Theroux will improve even on *The Great Railway Bazaar*. Isabel Colegate, with her first novel since *The Shooting Party*, will prove once again how woefully underrated she once was. And, with a blazingly original and extraordinarily mature novel, Justin Cartwright will leap straight into the front rank of novelists.

GMP A resurgence of interest in Klaus Mann and Forrest Reid; new writer Rohase Piercy retells Holmes and Watson's relationship; gay working-class hero Jack Robinson recounts his wartime experiences; controversial pop star Marc Almond publishes his poetry for the first time; art photography from gay Nigerian photographer Rotimi Fani-Kayode; artworks from gay Spanish painter Roberto González Fernández; male glamour photography from Max India; rediscovery of early pacifist novelist A.T. Fitzroy.

The Women's Press New voices from around the world, evidence of a new internationalising of British publishing (no, not the bland international book, product of mega-publishing) which is yet another trend we can lay some claim to helping to set. Our tenth catalogue includes eight new (originated) works of fiction: fables by Suniti Namjoshi (India); a hilarious tragicomedy by Frances Gapper (Britain); novels by Leena Dhingra (India), Tsitsi Dangarembga (Zimbabwe), Joan Riley (Jamaica/Britain), Millie Murray (Jamaica/Britain); a collection from the Asian Women Writers' Workshop; and a new thriller from Mary Wings (USA). The burgeoning of talent from black and third-world women writers at present is comparable only with the early days of feminist

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publishing, when one had the impression that every woman had a drawer full of works of the imagination, just waiting for the right publishers to recognise them.

Secker & Warburg On our list: James Kelman and Aidan Mathews, highly praised and original voices from Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively; Donald Barthelme, whom Malcom Bradbury calls "the best of the American short story writers"; Ben Okri, winner of the Commonwealth prize for literature; Gert Hofmann, an outstanding new German writer, previously published by Carcanet; Jim Crace's new novel; David Profumo, son of John, a most exciting talent; Marianne Wiggins, with a book that invites comparison with *Lord of the Flies*.

Verso On our list: Boris Kagarlitsky presents a unique perspective on *glasnost* from outside the official structures in *The Thinking Reed* — the *NS* has already run an extensive interview with this brilliant young Soviet thinker, co-ordinator of the newly-formed Socialist Clubs; *New Left Review* editor Robin Blackburn's long-awaited *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery 1776-1848*; our foremost scholar on Central America, James Dunkerley's *Power in the Isthmus*, a massive and authoritative political history of the region; new translations from Paul Virilio and Jean Baudrillard, plus Peter Sloterdijk's polemical treatise on modern culture, *Critique of Cynical Reason*, a bestseller in Germany. John Thackara's *Design After Modernism* (Thames & Hudson) will make waves beyond the design world it confronts. Mike Marqusee's brilliant novel *Slow Turn* (to be published in paperback by Sphere) succeeds where Gatting and co. have singularly failed in recent weeks by extracting excitement out of cricket. □

AIDS VILLAINS

While Rome burns

Duncan Campbell

The Search for the Virus
STEVE CONNOR and SHARON KINGMAN *Penguin* £3.95
CRISIS: Heterosexual Behaviour in the Age of Aids
WILLIAM MASTERS, VIRGINIA JOHNSON, ROBERT KOLODNY *Weidenfeld* £9.95

IN NEW YORK's *Village Voice* recently, Richard Goldstein offered the city a prayer for the coming Aids holocaust. "Someone has to survive this. Let it be us." Were the prayer to be extended to invite retribution on the people's enemies in the war against Aids, these two books, in quite opposite ways, offer suitable candidates for damnation.

The Search for the Virus, which highlights questionable behaviour by leading scientists, is a classic Penguin book of the old Pelican style: comprehensive, up-to-date, scientifically based, written by experts, above all educational. It avoids apparent politicking and moralism to lend credence to these purposes. In this, it well reflects the columns of the *New Scientist* which the two authors write and supervise — columns which some British Aids doctors are aware have often made their patients better informed on the latest clinical and research developments than they are.

But such a "neutral" format carries the price of eschewing proper headline journalism when there are important stories to be foregrounded. One of these is a major piece of scientific investigative journalism. Here, methodically investigated and clinically laid out, is the disturbing story of how leading US scientists bullied their way to the top of the queue to claim the discovery of the cause of Aids. The direct consequence was a year lost between the time when HIV (the virus that can cause Aids) was found and the day that the scientific community recognised the breakthrough as such. Come the day of judgment when the Aids pandemic is finally over, that lost year will be shown to have cost a heavy toll in lives.

A Frenchman, Professor Luc Montagnier, discovered the virus, first known as LAV, in 1983. Few appreciated the significance of his first, tentative paper. Yet a year later the US government announced that an American, Dr Robert Gallo, had discovered the virus; but he called it HTLV-3, erroneously labelling it as one of "his" family of discovered viruses. Of course, it was the same virus as LAV — and in more ways than one. In pursuit of the US claim to discovery and to patent rights to tests for the Aids virus, Gallo's team published as theirs pictures taken of the French virus, LAV. They disguised or overlooked the fact that "their" virus was a sample supplied to them by the French team. An ensuing three-year scientific battle between the Americans and the French was only resolved by a 1987 Heads of State meeting between Reagan and French Premier Jacques Chirac. At this point, the bug was renamed HIV, and both scientists were acclaimed as "co-discoverers".

This was a political convenience, far from the scientific truth. Gallo's behaviour before and after his "discovery" are an ugly lesion on the face of 1980s science. His subsequent attitude to the *New Scientist* for publishing the story of the erroneous claim is said to be quite as incandescent as Mrs Thatcher's last year in the matter of the *New Statesman*.

As scientists, however, Connor and Kingman have not gone into the social effects of the epidemic, and thus wander into some questionable constructions. They refer, for example, to stopping Aids as a battle against an invading army where the battle in respect of gay men has been "fought offshore" and "lost". This metaphor reproduces questionable and subjective views which elsewhere they properly attack. Aids sufferers are a part of society, not an "offshore" colony; and their own evidence is that the battle to stop HIV spreading in the gay community has been won through profound changes in personal behaviour.

With **CRISIS**, it is the writers who deserve wretched damnation. From the Masters and Johnson stable that brought you the sexually interesting 1960s, *CRISIS* has two main tenets: 1) that HIV infection has reached at least twice as far into the US population as the US government admits and 2) that the powers-that-be are deceiving us all about our chances of catching HIV from loo seats, mosquito bites and a litany of other superstitious occurrences (they even devote a chapter to the subject of loo seats).

To call *CRISIS* a comic would be unfair to the *Beano*. M&J's efforts are perhaps best epitomised by the passage where they discuss the utility of playing basketball in "rubberised suits from head to toe" and take themselves so seriously they find it necessary to point out that this isn't really a *recommendation*. This from another review:

> [This book] is not instantly recognisable for what it is: a thoroughly irresponsible, scientifically illiterate, panic-inducing piece of hypocritical mischief-making of which the authors and their publishers should be deeply, and enduringly ashamed.

Phew! But quite right too, and this quotation is not brought to you by reason of an attack of reviewer's laziness. If the *Daily Mail* and the *NS* can agree in their assessment of a book on *this* of all subjects, there's only one decent course for an honourable bookseller to take: return all stock to the publisher forthwith, for this is assuredly the publishing blunder of the year. □

FICTION

Genghis woz 'ere

Josephine Saxton

Chinese Whispers
ROBERT SPROAT *Faber* £10.95

IT WAS NOT THE TURKS but their micro-organisms which defended Western civilisation from the advance of the Mongol hordes. When Mangku, grandson of Genghis Khan, died of acute dysentery in 1259, his armies held to tradition and returned home.

Had this not happened, suggests Robert Sproat, his own novel might have been printed in Uighur script or ideograms; more probably, had he tried to write *at all* under the rule of the descendants of Genghis (formerly Tamburlaine, Temujin the Shepherd *et al*) Khan, he'd have had his hands cut off at the very least. (I will not offend you here with details of reprisals used by barbarians; everyone knows they were unkind.) Sproat's book is stuffed with what we now call Operant Conditioning of the most frightful ingenuity, purporting to be largely extracted from a Secret Official History of the Mongols, the story of psychotic megalomaniacs or great leaders. If, after 600 years, some brilliant writer exhumes a few facts or fancies about Hitler and, extrapolating, produces a "novel", what should the attitude be? Nostalgia?

As it is, the manner in which Sproat's book is written redeems it. It can be witty; is often humorous; it revels in detailed but controlled nightmares. Sproat is occasionally arch — with the one-word chapter intended to ambush us into sudden revelation of an idiom — but this is the tiny imperfection which stamps with authority the general perfection of his prose. Hardly a word is wasted or in the wrong place; the rhythms of the tailored sentences flow with an astonishing ease, never relying on flamboyance to obtain some very shocking and colourful effects.

It has always been futile to cavil at an artist using talent to depict and, sometimes, to revel in evil, to glorify that from which we now turn in horror. But, at this remove in time, there can hardly be an

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John Minnion's been drawing composers for the *Listener* for almost as long as he's been drawing Mrs Thatcher's nose for the *New Statesman*. Gentler, de-eroticised Aubrey Beardsleys, his musical drawings are currently on show at the Barbican, London EC2 (to 10 April) and reproduced in a book, BRITANNIA RULES THE STAVES (introd. Nicholas Kenyon, Thames, £4.95). Left: the 18th-century William Boyce with very un-Beardsleyesque organ. (HG)

itended moral in Sproat's tale — unless the observation that nothing changes might wake us up to the warlike cruelty of men. So perhaps we are simply meant to sigh with relief that those Turkish dysentry bacteria did in fact change history, and to understand that what directs history may be a triviality. But I do not think this new or amazing enough to furnish us with a book. There being nothing to admire in mass murder, greed, cruelty and sheer bloody waste, I am left with the puzzle of *why was it written*?

Aficionados of war and history, who also appreciate splendidly spare and elegant writing, will enjoy it; others may instantly find some point that has whizzed past my head like a barbarian's arrow. To me, the Khans were devils on horseback, villains best forgotten, who do not deserve to be sung as heroes. Still, if Hitler shows up in some distant work of literature as a Mighty Warlord who battled on in the face of all opposition, aiming to rule the world, defeated at last by winter, let us at least hope that it will be as well written as this very odd work. □

PSYCHOANALYSIS

No penis-envy

Gillian Wilce

A Mind of Her Own: The Life of Karen Horney
SUSAN QUINN *Macmillan* £16.95

KAREN HORNEY was one of the earliest Freudian analysts (herself analysed by Karl Abraham in Berlin before the First World War) and, more importantly, an independent thinker who was constructively dismissed by the New York Psychoanalytic Society in 1941 and became one of the founders of the new Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis. She nevertheless remains, on this side of the Atlantic at least, a peripheral and uninfluential figure.

She might have been thought to be a feminist champion since one of her earliest disputes with orthodox Freudianism was over the concept of penis-envy (she changed the slant of the idea towards a natural, even overt, envy of an advantage, counterbalanced by matching male womb-envy) and she increasingly emphasised the social and cultural factors shaping "neurotic trends", particularly in women. Nevertheless, she seems to rate at most a footnote or two in British feminist books about psychoanalysis — although Juliet Mitchell does deal briefly, in *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, with Karen Horney's early papers about female sexual development, arguing that, in spite of her plea for egalitarianism, she actually contributed to a kind of sterility in the debate by advancing a simple, biologically determined view of the nature of masculinity and femininity.

Now Susan Quinn's biography brings Karen Horney to the centre of the stage, telling her story efficiently and serviceably. It is almost like two sequential books. The first part (where there are perhaps a few too many "she must have felt"s) takes its tone from the youthful Horney's passionate adolescent diaries, detailing her thoughts about her father's awfulness and her mother's suffering, about school and crushes, about her studies as one of the first women medical students and, above all, about lovers. With an early rejection of any convention which did not seem to her reasonable, she lived as she chose sexually all her life. Already heading for a psychiatric career, but suffering in early married days from depression which compelled her into a search for causes, she was quickly caught up in Berlin's psychoanalytic world.

As so often with biography (as, indeed, with life), the story speeds up after the years as a beginning psychoanalyst and young mother of three daughters (sent off at a tender age to Melanie Klein for some most unwelcome treatment). In no time at all, Horney is separated from her husband, working as a training analyst and then, in 1932 — the year before Freud's books were publicly burned in Berlin — on her way to America for the rest of her life.

From here on the professional life is firmly in the foreground, with comparatively short glimpses of Horney's relationships with her daughters, her friends, her lovers. And the climax of this story of the migrant European analyst is one of struggle and schism — just as it was in this country, but with a different outcome. In spite of bitter differences beween Melanie Klein and Anna Freud, they were both in the end accommodated within the one British Psycho-Analytical Society; the New York psychoanalytic world was unable to accommodate Karen Horney and other colleagues like Erich Fromm. The sad coda to the story of this split is that the AAP itself was divided very soon after it came into being. How much Karen Horney contributed to this further splintering is not altogether clear. But she herself soldiered on, practising (there is testimony offered as to her ability as a clinician) and teaching, reformulating her thoughts, publishing widely read books like *Self Analysis* and *Neurosis and Human Growth* in her clear, sensible style and enjoying life — enjoyment that sometimes proved rather demanding of other people. Not long before she died, she was off to Japan exploring the ideas of Zen.

Susan Quinn brings Karen Horney affectionately before us: as the teenager writing lovesick

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poetry, as the refugee psychoanalyst with the strange shoes and the thick accent struggling to adjust to her new country, as the *bon viveur* getting drunk with Paul Tillich, as the thorough supervisor. What she doesn't quite do, though, is to induce excitement about what it was that Karen Horney actually had to *say*, what was original and important about her contribution to psychoanalytic thought. Unlike, say, Phyllis Grosskurth in her biography of Melanie Klein, she doesn't impel you straight from the life story to the subject's own writings. This could, of course, say as much about the lasting power of Karen Horney's contribution as it does about her biographer's skill. □

POETRY

An oriental air

Michael Hofmann

Fifty Poems
IAN HAMILTON *Faber* £4.95

THIS IS A SMALL, indispensable volume. It is a "collected poems" by any other name: but "fifty" expresses more regret, more limitation and more anxiety about the book's achievement than "collected" ever could.

That it has been published at all in the indifferent jostle of the 1980s is an act of some grace and imagination, for Ian Hamilton's reputation as a poet is neither new, nor booming, nor much discussed at all. Most readers over, say, 38 will know of his work; few under that age will have thought of him — the reviewer and television bookman, the self-effacing biographer of Lowell, Salinger's injuncted ghostbuster — as a poet at all. This book is for them.

The first 33 of the 50 poems made up Hamilton's previous Faber book, *The Visit,* published and reprinted in 1970, and unobtainable practically ever since. The next 11 appeared in a pamphlet, *Returning,* and the last half dozen in ones and twos over the last few years.

Most of the poems are generated by one or two subjects: a wife's mental illness and a father's death from cancer. The few exceptions are just as sombre. There is something terrible and heroic in this narrow focus, in the way that these few poems, produced over many years, should have settled so close by one another, with their themes of breakup and breakdown, their shattered atmosphere, their identical reference points of hands and heads and hair and flowers and grass and snow and shadow.

It is finally, I believe, these things that have appointed the poems and set them their range, and not the human subject-matter:

> Your breathing slightly disarrays
> A single row of petals
> As you lean over him. Your fingers,
> In the air, above his face,
> Are elegant, perplexed. They pause
> At his cold mouth
> But won't touch down; thin shadows drift
> On candle smoke into his hair.
> Your friendly touch
> Brings down more petals:
> A colourful panic. ("Last Respects")

The poems' stylistic "devices" (a heartless word to use) show as little variation and development as the poems themselves. They are short — half are ten lines or less — clipped and brilliant. Their compression, the denial of anything centrifugal or inessential, the absence of more than a single ornament (the petals, for instance) so that poem and ornament are coextensive, give each poem its somewhat oriental and exquisite air. Classical Chinese poetry seems close, and so does Lowell at his most imagistic — the Lowell of "For Sale" and "Father's Bedroom", whom William Carlos Williams admired.

Then there is the brevity and brittleness of the lines; it seems always possible that a poem may not find it in itself to continue, and will interrupt itself: "Half-suffocated, cancerous, deceived." The "deceived" stands alone. These are not the lines of turning the plough round and going on to the next furrow. Perhaps, with so little propulsion and stability, this is also the reason why the tally of Hamilton's poems is so low. Just as rare, nowadays, is their unwavering intensity. □

HORROR

Campbell is coming

Kim Newman

THE PROLIFIC Ramsey Campbell is represented in all these selections. Lately, he has been alternating flamboyant novels of supernatural terror like *Incarnate* and *The Hungry Moon*, awash with nightmarish reality shifts and Lovecraftian monstrosities, with quieter, more concentrated books like *Obsession*, in which delicately implied ghostliness intrudes into a convincingly down-at-heel modern world.

With **The Influence** (Century, £11.95), Campbell is in the latter mode and also returning to home territory, the grey, provincial tattiness of the Liverpool where he set *The Doll Who Ate His Mother* and *The Face That Must Die*. Queenie, an ancient and oppressive maiden aunt who has done her best to make miserable the lives of all her relatives, finally dies, and the Faraday family try their level best not to feel relieved. However, the old woman returns as the image of her stern child self and tries to usurp the life of Rowan, her innocent grand-niece.

Given that there have been at least a thousand "possessed child" books since *Rosemary's Baby* and *The Exorcist* brought the horror genre out of the ghetto, *The Influence* is an astonishingly fresh and non-derivative work. Quite apart from the skill with which he handles the ghost story elements — and there is a superbly sustained bit of weirdness as Rowan, displaced from her own body, wanders through an afterlife that mimics reality, pursued by a monstrous British Rail ticket collector — Campbell here demonstrates just how good a realistic novelist he could be if he wanted to limit himself: the Faraday family, downwardly mobile and trying to make a precarious living in a depressed area, are beset by economic and social horrors long before Queenie begins her witchiness.

Campbell's importance as a force in modern British horror is also demonstrated by **Dark Feasts** (Robinson, £3.95), a representative selection from the first 25 years of his career. He began, very young, as a disciple of H.P. Lovecraft, and produced a series of stories he now refers to as "youthful indiscretions" in the tentacled and overheated style of the Sage of Providence, one of which ("The Room in the Castle") he includes here — several others, along with a selection of more mature and probing variations on Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos, can be found in **Cold Print** (Grafton, £2.95). In a story common to both collections, "The Voice of the Beach", Campbell finally subsumes the Lovecraft influence and tries to recreate the potent mood of his horror stories without using any of the creaking mechanics.

However, Campbell soon progressed, and the bulk of *Dark Feasts* finds him working the mix of almost surreal ghastliness and almost too-real urban misery that makes his stories so unforgettably affecting when read one at a time and so difficult to take piled one upon the other in a collection like this. Campbell crams so much detail and angst into a ten-page story that you have to go away and read three novels between each shorter piece to get the full effect.

His protagonists are frequently isolated, depressed, harried and lower-middle-class, sometimes men middle-aged before their time, although he has also written some outstanding, unsentimentalised stories from the point of view of children. His supernatural intrusions are rarely the hungry, slimy abominations of Lovecraft or the barely-glimpsed spectres of the classic Victorian ghost story, but outcast creatures taking the forms of tramps, stray dogs, senile monstrosities or horror comic zombies, and almost invariably their designs on the protagonist are a lot more involved and unpleasant than merely biting their heads off. *Dark Feasts* includes stories in which the source of the horror is something as simple as a religious pamphlet ("The Words That Count"), second-hand books ("Out of Copyright"), a video nasty and a telephone number ("Boiled Alive"), or a family's holiday snaps ("Seeing the World").

Seven recent Campbell stories appear in **Night Visions** (Arrow, £2.95), a collection edited by George R.R. Martin which also features wedges of work by Lisa Tuttle (three stories) and Clive Barker (one novella). The three authors share many traits in their depiction of modern malaise, and generally tend to deal with characters destroyed utterly by a chance encounter with something ancient and evil. Barker's "The Hellbound Heart", which he has since streamlined in his screen adaption *Hellraiser*, is perhaps the least satisfying of the works presented here, with the author's trademark grotesquerie and character quirkiness enlivening a piece that reads too much like a film treatment. Tuttle deals with obsessive loves that lead to death or, in one case, to becoming Death, while Campbell finds horror in trees, trains and tinnitis.

Barker and Campbell are both represented in **Cutting Edge** (Futura, £2.95), a mainly American collection showcasing various modern horror practitioners — Peter Straub, Karl Edward Wagner, Charles L. Grant, Steve Rasnic Tem, Ray Russell, Robert Bloch, Whitley (dingbat) Strieber — which includes a disappointing number of inconclusive or rather pretentious tales, along with such impressive pieces as Straub's "Blue Rose", Marc Laidlaw's "Muzak for Torso Murders" and Les Daniels' wittily sick "They're Coming for You". □

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IN-FIGHTING

Bigger than Benn

Hilary Wainwright

The Rise and Fall of the Labour Left
PATRICK SEYD *Macmillan* £20 & £6.95

THE BITTER CONFLICT between Michael Foot and Tony Benn in 1981 symbolised a turning point in the history of the British left. At the time, even participants saw it mainly as a clash of personalities, intensified by the men's divergent political histories and sentiments. Michael Foot, the much-loved rebel of postwar Labour, taking on the responsibilities and constraints of office. Tony Benn, the suspect enthusiast behind the white-hot air of Wilson's technological rhetoric, now the rebel.

Another interpretation, that took into account Foot's defence of the 1974-79 government, his disowning of Peter Tatchell and his attempted intervention in the GLC Labour Group (to defeat Livingstone's bid for the leadership) would, however, portray the clash as the outcome of a new and fundamental political rift in Labour's left. A new left was emerging in the Labour Party, quite different from the Labour left of the 1950s and '60s. The left of Benn, Tatchell and Livingstone was different — in practice, though not yet in theory — in its attitude to the British state and parliament; different — again in practice — in its relationship to working-class action outside parliament; different in its understanding of Labour's constituency; different in its instincts of loyalty towards the party's structure and leadership.

Patrick Seyd has written a clear and thorough documentation of the events, organisations and leaders of "the Labour Left" from the 1970s on. His combination of insider knowledge — in Sheffield and nationally — and academic rigour is illuminating. He makes some perceptive comments on strategic failings of the left.

He does not, however, make *use* of his admirable empirical work to inquire into the deeper changes taking place in British politics — changes which surely lie behind the events he describes. So his study is claustrophobic: almost everything is explained and analysed in terms of the apparently closed world of the Labour Party.

The clash between Benn and Foot becomes primarily a clash of personalities and cabals. The movement for constitutional reforms reflected a new confidence among Labour party activists and a reaction against "the manipulative manoeuvring politics of Harold Wilson", nothing more. The Bermondsey incident was, well, a clash of Labour generations; no deeper rift is implied. Yet the constitutional reforms were a watershed, producing establishment outrage and causing the first major breakaway in the party since the 1930s.

Perhaps it is the repressed assumptions implicit in Seyd's own political beliefs that stop him asking what this dramatic break reveals about Labour's complicity in the institutions of Westminster and their relation to the majority of the population. First, he assumes that there is such a thing as the "Labour Left" (capital letters throughout the book), as if from the 1950s to the 1980s continuity predominated over change. Foot's own position is proof enough of the break; for Foot in his period as leader was no turncoat against his original beliefs. Rather, new and contrary views had developed on the left, mainly in reaction to Callaghan's Labour government which Foot defended. Seyd is inhibited from exploring the political significance of these changes on the left by a further assumption that a united Labour Party is an eternal "given"; its foundation can never crack.

Unintentionally, then, Seyd downgrades the importance of his subject matter for the future of British politics. The importance of the left in the party lies not in a historical continuity — change appearing only in the form of a rise and fall — and the permanent character of Labour, but in the fluidity of British politics which a new Labour left has done so much to shake up. □

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Alexandra Mathie and Faith Brook reconstruct the past in the punished *Foco Novo's* splendid production of Duras' *Savannah Bay*

Death of complexity

No one could argue that policies — of funding, commissioning, casting — which promote black theatre aren't necessary. But a simplistic reductionism can lead, says **VICTORIA RADIN,** *to such absurdities as the threatened 12 per cent cut in grant to Islington's Almeida*

LAST WEEK I WITNESSED two strange sights at the theatre: Harold Pinter and Antonia Fraser among the spectators at a Foco Novo production down at the Battersea Arts Centre, and a goodly proportion of black people among the audience at the Almeida in Islington.

Now those of you who go to the theatre in London will think I'm mad for saying this, for the Pinters are often to be seen at plays of particular merit and the Almeida is no stranger to any black person who arrives in search of theatrical excellence. Yet two funding bodies have denied what I have seen: the Arts Council, by chopping Foco Novo's grant by a massive 24 per cent, has implicitly declared the company's lack of importance; while Greater London Arts (GLA), headed by the white Trevor Vibert, has actually stated that one of their reasons for the 12 per cent cut to the Almeida is that its audience is insufficiently "multi-cultural".

This curious allegation, difficult to substantiate I would think (do they range round the audience with a light meter, or distribute questionnaires on ethnic origins?) forms part of their package of criticisms which claims that the Almeida does not produce enough black plays or cast a proper number of black actors. All this seems most peculiar as I scan the Almeida's programme of forthcoming events and read about a production by Maya Angelou of a black classic play, or when I remember that one of my best evenings ever was spent at the revival by Pierre Audi, the Almeida's artistic director, of *Four Saints in Three Acts,* the Virgil Thomson-Gertrude Stein opera for a huge company of black singers.

My own mind then takes GLA's bizarre turn. For was not *L'Os,* a play about an African village, performed at the Almeida by a group of actors from Peter Brook's Paris company, and did it not include performers from Africa, Vietnam and Japan? In this reductive manner, drawing simplistically on extra-artistic criteria, one approaches by an unusual route a dangerous or, at the least, very silly place for all of us. Joan Bakewell, in her otherwise excellent arts column in the *Sunday Times,* averred, in the Almeida's defence, that its director "is not white". Pierre Audi, who runs the most truly "multi-cultural" centre for theatre in London, is, for the record, of French-Lebanese-Jewish extraction. I do hope he is enjoying Britain's special brand of black humour.

The Arts Council has taken the Almeida's side against GLA and may have bailed them out (this time round) by the time you read this; but they are certainly the baddies in relation to Foco Novo, Roland Rees' touring company of 16 years' standing which exists to stage new work — much of it, by the way, "multi-cultural". Operating on a shoestring with a permanent staff of two, they have, as theatre companies will (*viz* the RSC) run up a deficit; for which the large cut in their small grant is a punishment. Ironically the news arrives at the opening of one of their most splendid productions, Marguerite Duras' **Savannah Bay,** in Barbara Bray's exquisite translation.

Duras wrote this two-hander to be performed by Madeleine Renaud in the role of an ageing actress: it is in some ways a meditation on the art of representation as perceived by the female performer — a species for whom, as readers of *Outside,* her collected journalism, will know, Duras holds a nearly child-like admiration.

Madeleine (here played by Faith Brook) is visited every day by a Young Woman (Alexandra Mathie, a very strong stage presence): together the pair reconstruct a story from the past which involves a girl of 16 who meets a man, becomes his lover and then drowns herself in the Savannah Bay of their meeting on the day their daughter is born.

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Madeleine may be this woman's mother, and the girl her daughter: both are bereft, in mourning, obsessively reliving someone else's passion — or Madeleine's former passion, or a dream passion — for a man whose smile "makes you think . . . that for once . . . even if only for an instant . . . it might be possible . . . to die for love". The play applauds the gesture while inducing, by means of its sensuous imagery, the dream-like state in which one does such things: that state in which we all partly live and which is formed by memory. It is a beautiful piece of work, directed by Susan Todd with a stately sense of the author's eddies and flows and rushes of emotion on Iona McLeish's circular and gauzy white set with a mirrored floor. The play goes to Cheltenham, Sheffield, Barnet and Bromley for the rest of its tour.

"We are witnessing the death of complexity," says someone in Howard Barker's *The Last Supper*. Like Duras, Barker pursues non-naturalistic means to get at the texture of human experience — the only means available to the dramatist today, I believe. But Barker is an odd case, a poet with a mission and a message, and he is variably successful. **Possibilities,** produced by Not the RSC and the Almeida Theatre, where it has just finished its run, is a series of ten separate playlets, all moral conundrums, set during and in the aftermath of wars: the period when Barker's unarguable but here rather shrilly propounded thesis that "life and pain are inextricable" is at its most evident.

All the tales are in some way fables of perversity. An emperor wracked by guilt has his boot polisher flogged to allay it; a weaver discovers that blood of a murdered colleague makes the best colour.

Set on Julian McGowan's bitterly grey post-holocaustical stones, the pieces show the influence of Beckett that I find so often in Barker's work; and none of them more so than the wonderfully loony monologue of a tramp-like bookseller (played with bright lugubriousness by Nicholas Woodeson) who pushes a pram bundled with the volumes to which he is determined no one shall have access.

Barker's **The Last Supper,** showing now at the Royal Court, then on to Leicester on 30 March, sustains this agreeably dark but comic and somehow kindly tone — one that doesn't shut the door in our faces.

Set again in nowhere, but with a Russian twist (designer Dermot Hayes' imposingly vaulted doorway of icons), it tells the story of a Christ-like sage who grows tired of his disciples during a famine and contrives a most unusual way of feeding them and saying goodbye.

Led by Philip Sayer, the splendidly-odd cast of 13 collected by director Kenny Ireland makes this convocation of types, with its leaning towards the intellectual, seem like a bohemian dinner party where the guests flaunt their madnesses, explore the paradoxes of their emotions and possibly disappear into the bedroom for a few disappointing moments with the host. Barker implies that his guru may be dreaming up his guests, as the artist does his characters; and much of the excellence of the work and its light take-it-or-leave-it tone arises, I believe, from the fact that here the author is writing primarily to solve something for himself. Sadly, and ominously, the more portentous *Possibilities* has so far been the event the Barkophiles have sought. □

MUSIC BOOKS

Singer not the song

Andrew Clements

SELECTIONS FROM the letters of Schoenberg, Berg and Webern have been available in English translation for a couple of decades, though none of the composers has yet been treated to a collected edition. Berg in particular has been very partially served: the volume published here in 1971 as *Letters to his Wife*, and sternly supervised by his widow, tells only half the story of their marriage — and, until now, we have been unable to read much of his links with anyone else.

But the appearance of **The Berg-Schoenberg Correspondence** (Macmillan, £30), scrupulously edited by Juliane Brand, Christopher Hailey and Donald Harris, throws a powerful beam on the most significant of those links by far: what began as a relationship between a teacher and his gifted pupil, continued to grow throughout Berg's life, until the letters exchanged in his last year are very much of two composers at the height of their powers.

The image of Schoenberg as difficult and quick to take offence receives further reinforcement in his writings here; the young Berg often has to tread warily not to cause rifts. Nevertheless it's clear that he benefitted from his elder's support and patronage long after his formal studies had ceased; Schoenberg puts copying and scoring work his way: the preparation of the full score of *Gurrelieder* occupies a substantial portion of the correspondence. There is, though, surprisingly little discussion of Berg's own works: of his two operas *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*, about both of whose subject matter Schoenberg harboured reservations, we learn nothing new. Yet, when Berg in his *Lyric Suite* finally embraced the 12-note technique that Schoenberg had evolved, it occasions a detailed explanation of his methods — evidently, even at the age of 40 with an established international reputation, he felt the need to justify himself to his old master.

The insights offered in the first two volumes of what is clearly intended to be a continuing series from Faber are never of the same magnitude, but nevertheless both **Mahler Remembered** by Norman Lebrecht and **Ravel Remembered** by Roger Nichols (£15 & £6.95 each) are more than useful compilations of anecdote and reminiscence. Both authors have trawled widely and managed to include a substantial amount of material never before made available in English. In this context Mahler provides perhaps the more fertile fishing ground and Lebrecht succeeds in rounding out a portrait of his composer very much in the context of his milieu: a product of Viennese society yet at the same time detached from it because he was a Jew. Ravel, altogether a more definable quantity to us nowadays than the still partially misunderstood Austrian, is easier to encompass; Nichols' selection emphasises the personality rather than the music — or, rather, the paradox between Ravel's perfectly finished, emotionally contained expressive world and the evident warmth and gregariousness of his friendships.

Relationships, predominantly social rather than musical, are the main business of Susana Walton's memoir of her husband. **William Walton: Behind the Facade** (Oxford, £12.95) is crammed with glossy names dropped from the greatest possible height; what few footnotes there are seem merely to be extracts from *Burke's Peerage*. The couple met and married in 1948; by then Walton's position in the British musical establishment was firmly fixed and his most enduring works had already been written. Lady Walton is not especially revealing on the reasons for her husband's waning creativity, nor indeed on the origins of the works he did complete in the rest of his career. She does, however, take the opportunity to settle a few old scores, and the book ends up as less a portrait of a significant figure in this country's music of the last 50 years than a gossipy account of a society marriage, ultimately only of background use to some future more serious Walton biographer.

Christopher Fifield's **Max Bruch: His Life and Work** (Gollancz, £30) is altogether more serious and timely. Bruch remains known almost exclusively for a trio of works for violin and orchestra; the remainder of his output, including three operas, three symphonies and a host of choral pieces, goes largely unperformed. Fifield's narrative is stronger on biography than musical analysis and what discussion of the unfamiliar pieces there is is almost entirely descriptive. Still, there remains enough detail to whet the appetite for several of the large choral and orchestral pieces that in the year of the composer's 150th anniversary might merit a revival.

Moderately long-serving readers of these art pages will remember Peter Conrad's time as the *NS*'s opera critic, perhaps remember too some of the articles which reappear amalgamated in his **A Song of Love and Death: The Meaning of Opera** (Chatto, £25). The book is partitioned into topics — "Rite", "Repertory", "Performance" — and the lacing together of existing articles has often been artfully done. In short spans, Conrad's discussion of opera, its "meaning" more than its presentation, is dazzling; given prolonged exposure, however, its limitations become all too obvious. It's disturbing to read a book of 380 pages on an art form which binds together two disciplines so intimately and to discover that one of those disciplines, music, receives so little attention; it's tiring to discover an analytical method so unvaryingly applied to subject after subject, opera after opera, until it becomes a catalogue of aesthetic *aperçus*. Conrad has been able to consume an enviable amount of high-quality performances in the last 15 years but appears little changed by the experience; his book serves as a salutary warning to any critic who suddenly conceives a passion for seeing his collected pearls strung together in hard covers. □

Cinema

Sorry for the lack of a column this week, but look out for next week when Chris Petit reviews Steven Spielberg's **Empire of the Sun,** *NS* 8 April when Jim Pines writes about **Hollywood Shuffle** and, for *NS* 15 April, the return of Judith Williamson.

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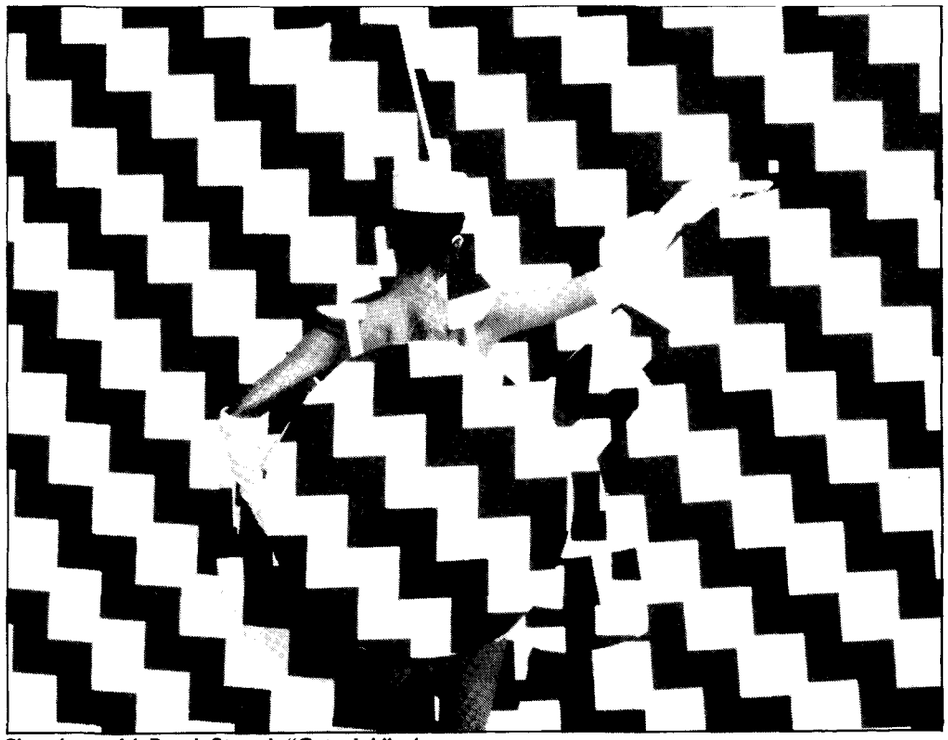

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Leave my history alone

Jon Savage

THE CAMERA FASTENS onto a young man watching television. Short-haired, he is dressed generic trendy; the interior has that heightened '50s/'80s look common to many ads and to films like *Blue Velvet*.

Against a Stockhausen backdrop of mediawash, the young man gets up to perform his significant gestures. We see him, lovingly shot with all the correct close-ups, making a cuppa — one tea-bag, milk on top — before returning to his "avant-garde" environment. So, what's this selling? Milk? Stockhausen? Tea-bags? All is explained when the caption comes up for an ad agency: how to make your TV ads different from everyone else's, the Ogilvy and Mather way.

Here is the motion of commodity culture — as ads advertise ads in a seamless, apparently unbreakable circle. Music has an important part to play in this perfervid enclave: as money becomes not a means but an end in itself, in a closed, corporate system, music must follow suit. Thus the lush, seductive tones of modern pop or dance music — best heard in one of the many "Megastores" — is only slightly different from the trance-inducing musak traditionally employed in supermarkets, while the nostalgic trigger of "classic pop" is a valuable hook for television advertisers attempting to snag your narcotised attention.

Television ads have long featured snatches of poptones but what was once a stream has become a flood. The Levis' ads with their careful "period" detail and *original* songs define the smart end of the market but they are unusual: much more common are ads which take a hit from the folk-memory bank and re-record it with new words to suit the product concerned. Samples from several days' random viewing include new versions of "Yakety Yak" (Green Shield Stamps/Mobil), "Get a Job" (Brook Street), "Apache" (Tango), "Mr Soft" (Trebor), "Mr Moonlight" (Terry's), "Whatever You Want" (Bella), "Thank U Very Much" (Cadbury's Roses), "Twist and Shout" as per the Beatles (Ross Foods), "The Power of Love" (Durex), "Mellow Yellow" (Yello Mello) and, most irritatingly, "Da Doo Ron Ron" (Heinz Ketchup), "Israelites" (Kraft Vitalite) and "Tired of Waiting" (Nivea Shampoo).

This is not accidental. The music industry is at present undergoing a major, unseen shift from being a producer of *things* — i.e. records, CDs, cassettes — to being an exploiter of rights that exist on paper: principally performance and publishing copyrights. Although there are as yet no statistics, it seems likely that revenue from this "secondary" income is now equal to royalties — i.e. revenue minus products and distribution costs — from the sale of goods. The result of this reification, which is also due to the music industry's successful integration into the multi-national media economy, can be seen in the number of film sound-tracks, video-cassettes and pop TV programmes currently available.

And, of course, TV adverts featuring music. Alerted to the revenue possibilities — anything from £15,000 for a local ad to £250,000 for a multi-national biggie, plus the spin-off potential for rereleasing — record company divisions of giants like Polygram now use their Music Publishing sections to tout their copyright material to agencies, following the work of specialist song-finders like Song Seekers. Under Copyright Law, the copyright holder can do what he/she wants with the song, whether or not the writer agrees. Despite well publicised incidents like the Beatles' US case about the use of "Revolution" in a Nike ad, in practice most writers are happy to receive fresh payment and publicity for a long dormant asset.

From a business point of view, this works well and, since that is currently the sole justification for anything, very few people have questioned what violence is being done to pop history. It came home to me while watching "Tired of Waiting for You" — part of *my* past — but, as advertising begins to plunder all pop time, it will rewrite most people's past. I deeply resent seeing songs like "Israelites" rewritten to sell a paste, or "Da Doo Ron Ron" reinforcing class stereotypes — the black train guard, the "Ya" braying Yuppies with their Volvo estate — because those songs were originally part of an enfranchising social process. Their very success gave a voice and a face to the dispossessed: whether, in these cases, West Indians, white working-class punks or pure mavericks. Today, that success is turned against them as they are reemployed to prop up an oligarchic, outmoded but highly powerful value system.

The spread of "classic" pop ads reinforces a current opinion — held on both left and right — that that's all pop ever was: marketing, consumption, a product. It's certainly true that pop's assimilation into the colonising thrust of the multi-national media industry marks the end of consumption as a democratic project, and that most pop music today is either explicitly or implicitly selling something. Yet to insist that this is pop's sole function is to surrender to the circle: to enter into a common dialogue of hopelessness. It is a feature of the politics of commodity capitalism and its culture that, despite its extreme aridity, it brooks no other view, no other possibilities. Yet the tighter the circle the more fragile it becomes. When the bubble of postmodernism is pricked, the voices on the margins will be there, waiting to seize their moment. □

TELEVISION

From him that hath not

W. Stephen Gilbert

AS IS TRADITIONAL in Budget week, television addressed itself frequently to the economic condition of the nation — so it seemed a good time to look for traces of John Birt's policy in the BBC's provision of a Budget context.

Panorama carried a report by Gavin Hewitt, produced by Giselle Portenier, on **The Underclass of '88**, its prospects and the provision being made to relieve its privations. Taking Sheffield as an exemplar, the report contrasted the extensive redevelopment of the city with the tendency, as one local academic put it, "to leave a lot of people on the sidelines". A wide range of expert opinion and empirical evidence was thrown into the mix, not forgetting next month's introduction of the new social security system whereby a number of benefits will be lost in the creation of Income Support and the so-called Family Credit.

That the range should be as exhaustive as possible is a prime Birtian tenet and the report touched all bases and all arguments, even embracing an intervention by former Thatcher adviser David Willetts, now of the Centre for Policy Studies, that made the government's actual plans

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Walking into the exhibition KARSH: A BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION (Barbican until 24 April) brings on a fit of *déjà vu*. It's not just that the faces in this 20th-century gallery of fame are familiar, it's that these are the very portraits by which we know them: Churchill's belligerent stare, Joan Crawford's draped turn of the shoulder (above), Einstein's crepuscular sadness. Being Karshed is photography's international equivalent of a place in Madame Tussaud's and, where the powerful are concerned, assumes the same inseparable vulgarity of excess. The Kennedys and the Rainiers model in double profile for postage stamps, Ekberg and Bardot do no more than flaunt flesh; the Pope prays in full-colour, too humble to face the camera, while Castro devours it in a greedy display of pure will. It's these, and not the more reticent studies, that carry the Karsh hallmark. (Liz Heron)

look positively Bevanite. Willetts is your man for the nostrum that poverty is irradicated if people are "motivated to become prosperous", as though you've only got yourself to blame if you're priced out of a market by speculators, or you're made redundant at an uncompetitive age by a rationalising industry, or you find artificial rises in the price of essentials like electricity and eye tests push your fixed income from barely adequate to insufficient. Anway, Willetts noted compassionately, it's not as if the needy in Britain suffer "unacceptable levels of hardship" such as might be found among "the poor people of Calcutta". That's all right then; when such a time comes, the Willettses of this world will no doubt find another convenient formula for explaining it away.

But, valuable as it was to catch a sense of the extent to which these advisors are oblivious to real life, the report was infuriatingly dense and convoluted. The Birtian "mission to explain" is all very well as long as a clear line of exposition is established at the outset. But this perfectly laudable philosophy is shackled to an older commitment for BBC journalism, the notion of balance. And that commitment has been renewed to a degree at which scrupulousness begins to undermine explication. The anxiety to catch every nuance rendered this report diffuse, repetitive and, worst of all, unwatchable.

Central's returning daytime programme aimed at older viewers, **Getting On**, had promised in *TV Times* to "remind viewers of the reformed social security benefits", but this proved to be little more than an invitation to write in for that good old stand-by, the factsheet. The programme did well by the imminent imposition of £10 charges on dental and eye tests, however, with a comprehensive demolition of the policy by an optometrist who warned that many, especially among the old, will go unnecessarily blind and urged viewers to write to their MPs. There was also a serenely dazzling appearance by Barbara Castle, who plans to stand down as an MEP because she feels, at 77, that it's time to play a more visible role as a speaker on domestic politics — "street corners, I don't care where it is".

Getting On is the archetype of that kind of low-budget, mixed-bag magazine, made in the studio and offering "something for everyone" within an already declared constituency, that has been the staple of television since Cecil Madden launched *Picture Page* in television's inaugural week at Alexandra Palace. Its characteristics are its friendly and confidential tone and the blithe confidence with which it takes vertiginous leaps of the "and-now-for-something-entirely-different" sort.

But all that such programmes tend to achieve, as with the benefit factsheet, is to direct the interested viewer's attention to something rather more informative than the programme itself.

On *Panorama*'s *Underclass of '88*, Social Security minister Nicholas Scott, who had to acknowledge that the DHSS was increasingly referring the needy to charity, called Britain's charities "a glorious tradition" and roundly cited the RAF Benevolent Fund as if its (doubtless sterling) work ought to encourage the underclass. But two programmes last week issued graphic warnings that said charities were now sitting ducks for the most ruthless kind of exploitation and misrepresentation. For Granada's *World In Action*, producer Vyv Simson, assisted by what looked like heroic research by Steve Boulton, made **Faith, Hope and Charity**, and C4's *Dispatches* carried DBA Belfast's report **Cheating the Charities**, produced by Brendan Hughes.

Both programmes door-stepped alleged charity cowboys, neither proving able to produce much more than a generalised sense of wrong-doing — though Granada, with its long experience of such techniques, made more headway on a couple of pretty meagre stories than the Irish company could with what kept promising to be a major scam. Indeed, the latter's highly questionable reconstructions, inconclusive use of documentation and "witnesses" and the pellmell pestering of suspects in situations where perfectly understandable irritation and evasion was offered as if evidential . . . these approaches only seemed calculated to give investigative journalism a bad name.

New head of the Charity Commission Robin Guthrie looked pretty wan in both programmes and appealed lamely for changes in the law. The *Dispatches* concluded by savaging the Commission. The obvious effect of these reports will be to discourage people from giving to charity at all. Back to you, Nicholas Scott. □

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Orwell's caricature

Tony Beeton, Oxford

I was interested to read your leader (*NS* 11 March) which makes a credible case for the view that the BBC has been hijacked by true-believers in Mrs Thatcher's popular capitalism. If anything though, you play down the significance of this for the BBC's position as a fair and impartial public broadcaster, and the dilemma it creates for the left — and even those "bourgeois liberals" who have joined us.

It is not simply a question of making an effective defence of existing broadcasting institutions, although that is important, but of finding a way to combine it with a redefinition and reformation of public service broadcasting. Funding, as you point out, is fundamental, and the weaknesses of the existing system have contributed to the BBC's downfall, but that should not persuade us to surrender to the arguments of free-market privateers. You seem to approve, for example, moves towards greater use of independents. Fine, but let's be clear that as the government's preferred 25 per cent solution is reached, a portion of our licence fees will actually be going into the pockets of *private* producers who want to be part of a wider market in programmes.

Now we can debate the role of the market in providing entertainment on television and radio, but it is far from clear that we can reconcile its operations with the public duties contained in the BBC's Charter and Broadcasting Act. We can also consider whether a clutch of new institutions or a reformed BBC and IBA would provide the best framework for future broadcasting in this country. But, as the new technologies take us into an era of multinational media corporations and the Thatcherites continue their depredation of the existing public system, we must extend the debate beyond issues of funding and structure to those of principle.

The left's argument should be for a securely funded, autonomous, public broadcasting system as a pillar of our wider liberties. Such a system would be diverse, offer greater opportunities for access — room here for genuinely independent productions — and be democratically accountable. Perhaps it is worth reminding ourselves that Orwell put the Ministry of Truth at the heart of *1984's* unfreedom after his wartime experience working for the BBC. It would be unforgiveable if we allowed Tory intolerance to turn his caricature into reality by destroying the independent broadcasting which is at the heart of our freedom today.

A terrible beauty

Ulick O'Connor, Dublin

In an obituary of Sean MacBride, Nobel Peace Prize and Lenin Peace Prize winner, on the leading page of the *Sunday Telegraph* on 17 January 1988, written by Bruce Anderson, the late Sean MacBride was described as "a murderer, a psychopath" and having an "especially despicable connection with Unesco, half Third World playpen, half Soviet stooge". These terms were of a nature which did not merit reply. Anderson, Assistant Editor of the *Sunday Telegraph,* went on to quote a few lines of Yeats' about MacBride's father from "Easter 1916": "A drunken vainglorious lout./ He had done most bitter wrong/ To some who are near my heart."

"It is a pity Yeats never wrote about the son," he commented. It is even more of a pity that Anderson failed to complete the quotation, which continues: "He too, has resigned his part/ In the casual comedy;/ He, too, has been changed in his turn,/ Transformed utterly:/ A terrible beauty is born." The complete poem makes it clear that Yeats intended to convey that John MacBride's participation in the Easter Rebellion had ennobled him, as it had done McDonagh, Connolly and Pearse. Three Irish writers, Brian Friel, playwright, Anthony Cronin, poet, and myself, plus artist Michael Kane, wrote to the *Sunday Telegraph* to request that they make this clear by publishing our letter. They have refused to do so.

This is particularly disturbing in the context of the British government's refusal to publish the Stalker report on "shoot to kill" policy in Northern Ireland, and subsequent constructions of Irish "character" in the press following last week's tragedies.

Naked class

Gregory Woods, London N4

Hilary Bichovsky-Little is wrong when she says that "Nakedness disguises class" (*NS* 11 March). I'm not in a position to comment on women, but judging by my own all-too-limited experience of naked men, the body can be a mass of tell-tale signs.

Take any example and look closely. In what state are his hands and feet? How has his build been shaped by the nature of his work? How, indeed, does he carry his nakedness? Does he have tattoos? What parts of him are tanned, and how deeply? How does he wear his hair and facial hair? Is he circumcised? And so on. Stand a brickie next to a stockbroker, both naked, and I bet I can tell you which is which.

Surely the point is that the kinds of body which are used in advertising tend to be all of one type; and they therefore, by accumulation, *appear* to belong to a seamless continuity of social status. But all of the visibly working-class bodies have been weeded out.

Labour Party democracy

Bryan Davies, Secretary, Parliamentary Labour Party, House of Commons

Perhaps Ed Pearce should stick to sketch writing where he gets top marks for artistic interpretation. His criticism of Labour's response to proposed changes in Commons procedures (*NS* 12 March) is short on technical merit because it is based on a factual error and false supposition.

The facts are that during the week commencing 7 March, Labour — through the "usual channels" — was objecting to the proposed business for the Monday before the Budget, which the government insisted should be debate on two major Bills, Housing (Scotland) and, after midnight, the Social Security Bill. On Wednesday of that week the Shadow Cabinet formally objected. Despite further negotiations the government insisted on sticking to its proposal. Frank Dobson challenged this decision when the business was formally announced in the House onThursday. Labour threatened through the usual channels to run the Housing (Scotland) Bill and Social Security Bill through the night and next day thus jeopardising the Budget. The government's alternative would have been to adjourn the Social Security Bill, and miss the deadline of April which the Bill was designed to hit. This would have been very awkward for them as it contained amendments necessary to correct mistakes in previous Social Security legislation.

Faced with that, the government decided to drop the Housing (Scotland) Bill from Monday's business. In an announcement to the House on Friday morning the Social Security Bill was then brought forward from midnight to prime time debating at 3.30 pm on Monday but with a guillotine. We welcomed the prime time — Frank Dobson objected to the guillotine.

Our Front Bench used the guillotine debate to highlight the contrast between the Tories' shoddy treatment of poor people through the Social Security changes with the forecast Budget bonanza for the rich. This worked. We got 142 column inches of coverage on "Social Security and Unfairness" in the serious newspapers. Over the next three days Neil Kinnock, John Smith and Robin Cook hammered the same theme in the debate on the Budget and helped mould public opinion against the Lawson giveaway.

Labour's success went down very badly with the government's business managers. The same ploy had been used by Frank Dobson on the guillotine debate on the abolition of ILEA and by Bruce Grocott on the Poll Tax guillotine. So much for Labour not knowing how to handle guillotine debates.

Ed Pearce then goes on to claim that Frank Dobson does not understand the subtleties and threats which lie in some proposals from the House of Commons Procedure Committee, particularly on the guillotining of most legislation. As Ed Pearce could have found out, arrangements have been made for the whole matter to be discussed by the PLP's Parliamentary Affairs Committee and by the Shadow Cabinet prior to discussion at a full meeting of the PLP. Then, but only then, will Frank be in a proper position to talk to the Tories through the usual channels and make public pronouncements on these issues. This may convey terrible overtones of democracy. The Tories would much prefer cosy private deals. They will have to learn to live with changes on the Labour side. As Frank promised when he was appointed Shadow Leader of the House, he is a very unusual usual channel!

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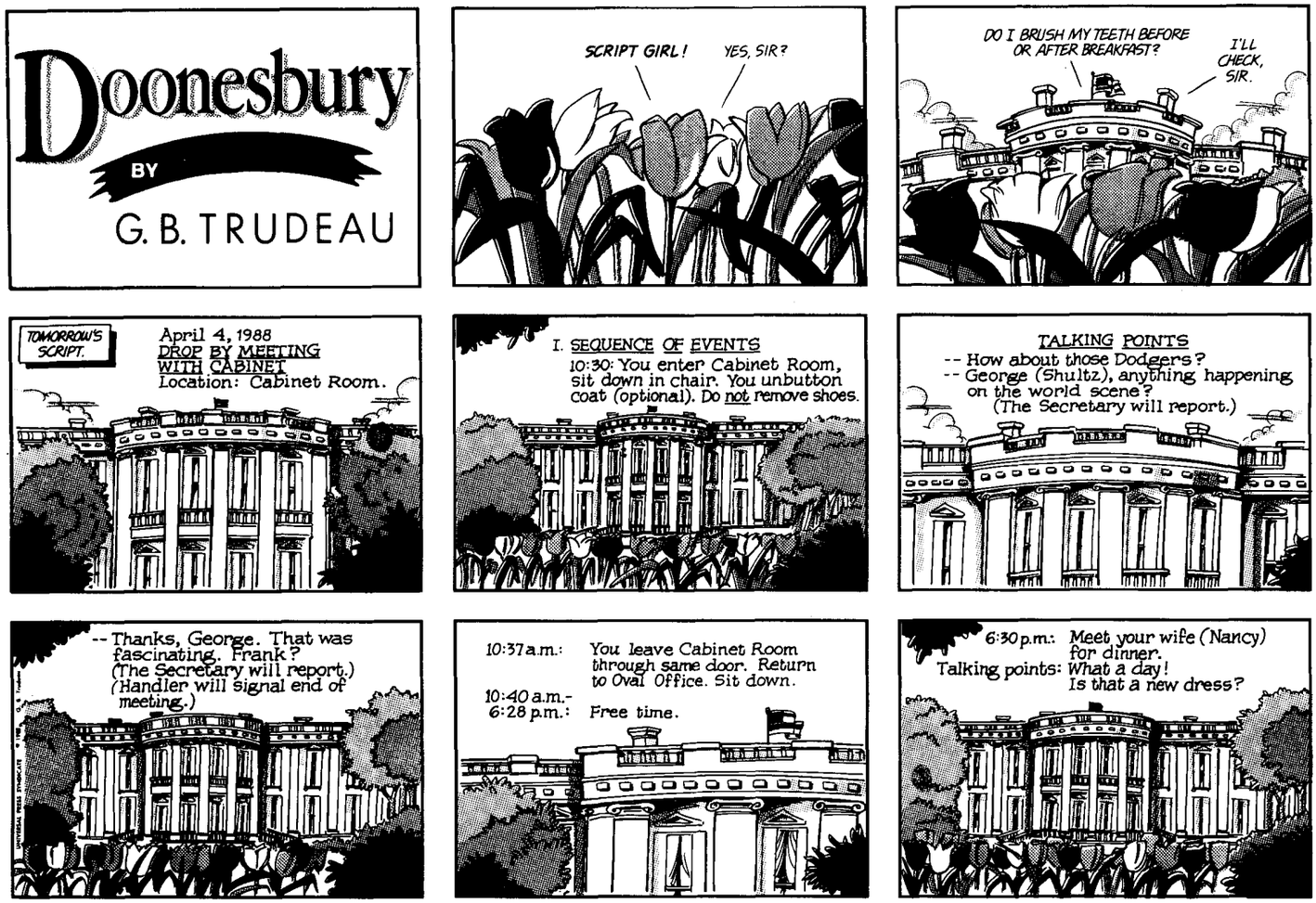
Doonesbury
BY
G. B. TRUDEAU
SCRIPT GIRL!
YES, SIR?
DO I BRUSH MY TEETH BEFORE OR AFTER BREAKFAST?
I'LL CHECK, SIR.
TOMORROW'S SCRIPT.
April 4, 1988
DROP BY MEETING WITH CABINET
Location: Cabinet Room.
I. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS
10:30: You enter Cabinet Room, sit down in chair. You unbutton coat (optional). Do not remove shoes.
TALKING POINTS
-- How about those Dodgers?
-- George (Shultz), anything happening on the world scene?
(The Secretary will report.)
-- Thanks, George. That was fascinating, Frank?
(The Secretary will report.)
(Handler will signal end of meeting.)
10:37 a.m.: You leave Cabinet Room through same door. Return to Oval Office. Sit down.
10:40 a.m.-6:28 p.m.: Free time.
6:30 p.m.: Meet your wife (Nancy) for dinner.
Talking points: What a day!
Is that a new dress?

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The successful candidate will have a wide knowledge of the Southern African region as a whole and will have a good working knowledge of Portuguese. Experience of project identification, monitoring and evaluation together with communication skills is required.

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For job description and application form please write to: *The Personnel Office, War on Want, 37-39 Great Guildford Street, London SE1 OES.*

CLOSING DATE FOR RETURN OF COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS: *FRIDAY, 8 APRIL 88.*

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bfi

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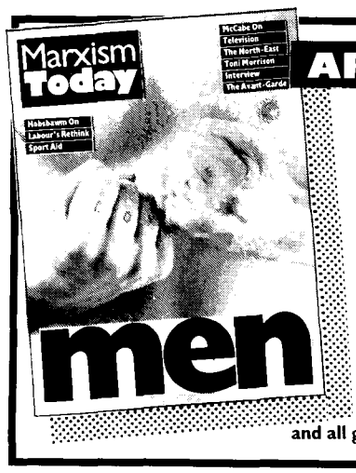
SAT 26 MAR

SCOTTISH LABOUR ACTION Founding Conference 11 am CITY HALL GLASGOW Dennis Canavan MP, Dick Douglas MP, Jim Devine COHSE. Contact Ian Smart: Tel (041) 889 8578.

FRI 1 APR

CND LONDON TO ALDERMASTON MARCH Assembles at Hyde Park. All marchers 8a.m. Day walkers 9.30 a.m. Aldermaston base rally 4th April noon. Contact Campaign For Nuclear Disarmament 01-250 4010.



APRIL ISSUE

- **Cynthia Cockburn on the problem with men**
- **Interview with Toni Morrison**
- **Eric Hobsbawn rethinks Labour**

Plus: French Elections, Sex Proteins and Sport Aid

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Weekend competition

No 3018 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

Wanted, songs (to existing tunes) from the musical version of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, Einstein's *The Theory of Relativity* or some other seminal scientific work. Max 12 lines by 6 April.

No 3015 **Set by Gray Dorn**

Title for the merged *New Statesman/New Society*.

Report **By Babe Bio**

This one reerly got you going — just like it has the bosses here. Fifty-severn entries in all, and one of them with *30* serjescherns. I've dessided to ignore the seriers ones becors, if were being seriers, its my opinion that a real change of title would be such a cock-up that other *NS* cock-ups would shrivvel into insignificernce. So, wot about the jokers? First, they were all quite typikerly cynical: lots of serjescherns like *The New Yuppy, The Dependent, News Weakly*. Why wont you believe that the new magazine will be fearless and risponsible, witty and seriers, tender and strong, committed and *quite* independent?

Other serjescherns were toterlly weird: *Babe's Rave-in* I personally like, but don't see boosting sirculation; *Neil's Knockers* has charm, but ditto; *The Back (incorporating the Stab)* obviersly comes from someone on the staff while *The Salamanca Crossword Magazine* just doesn't sem intirely representative. My heart is really with those who simply told us DON'T DO IT, but three pounds per new title printed below, with a spesherl prize of £4 to brillyernt Michael Leapman.

Who's Left? or *Whose Left?* (perhaps alternating weekly — or weakly?)

MICHAEL LEAPMAN

The Very New Statesman Indeed

NOEL PETTY

The Really Nice Caring Magazine which Is a Bit to the Left but Not Enough to Upset Anyone Weekly

V. ERNEST COX

Smarties

ANN SCHLUSS

Radical Sheep

JANE ALLEN

In memory of an earlier merger (and in anticipation of the inevitable): *The Weakened Review*

NIMAI CHATTERJI

Exchange and Marx

DAVID DEACON

NS the Menace

WILL BELLENGER

Left Alone

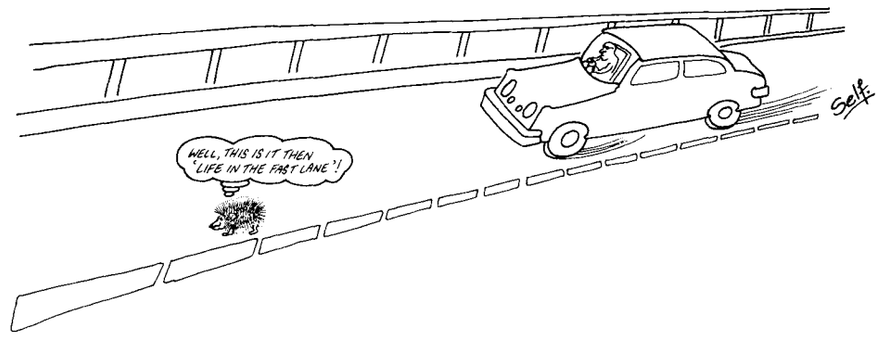
B. YOUNG

The Bastard

ALISON PRINCE

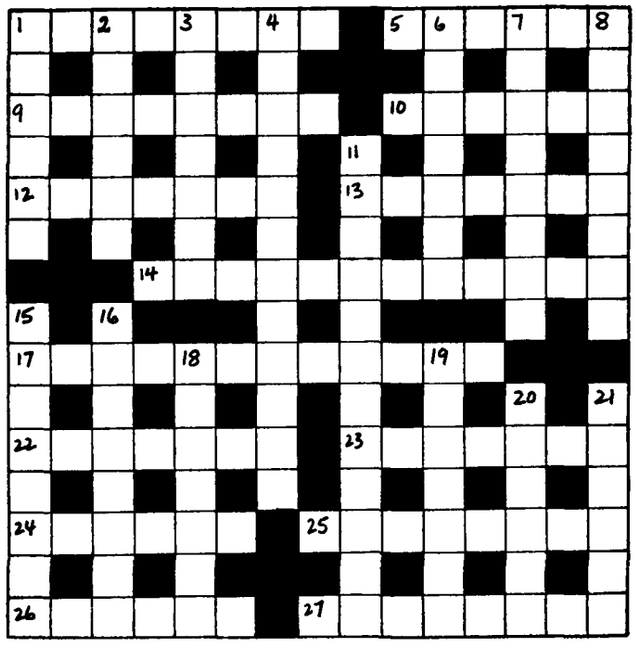
What shall I call you? Let me try and guess.
Some bold new name would speed you on your way.
It is no easy task, for just *NS*
Still means the *Statesman* (which has had its day).
Do not go in for awkward combinations:
Statesmen in Society just won't do. . .
Though there is virtue in such appelations:
You can't just add another *New* to *New*.
You must not, mainly, break with all tradition;
There's loyalty among the reading plebs.
You should ignore the ghostly admonition
From the grim shades of Shaw and both the Webbs.
May I suggest — I do so very meekly —
That you become the *Anti-Thatcher Weekly?*

E.O. PARROTT



Weekend Crossword 1590

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1590, New Stateman, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ by first post 12 April.



Name_____

Address_____

_____

ACROSS

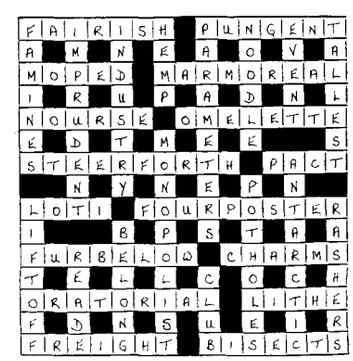
1. Beauty treatment provides the truth about change of life (8)
5. Cricket official who gives middle in the middle (6)
9. Have too many reservations concerning work (8)
10. Grounds for thanks in a disease being set back (6)
12. Deceit which is no longer practised during a sporting competition (7)
13. Swear about terrorists appearing in armour (7)
14. They may be going cheap but mothers embrace an ancient virtue (7, 5)
17. Agonising tendency in the audience (12)
22. Lamb gets behind a high ball in the garden (7)
23. Unappreciative person needs tearing in pieces (7)
24. Charge afresh when nearly all of the bread is seen in colour (6)
25. I dream in turning a curve (8)
26. The northerner when dining out is better dressed (6)
27. One saint turns out to be an East European (8)

DOWN

1. Tufts of a girl twice caught with one (6)
2. Split stick (6)
3. One is in a liberal age for an African country (7)
4. The servant carries a utensil for a railway worker (12)
6. Failing to acknowledge a heroine (7)
7. A torrid circulation round a heater (8)
8. Fools enter most of the others to provide a fresh estimate (8)
11. Tools which are no use for a straight shot? (12)
15. Vessel holding hot coal (8)
16. Spoil a girl in a holiday resort (8)
18. Farming throughout one's life? (7)
19. For a little chap possibly one has guts (7)
20. Animal with a hole in its heart (6)
21. A man who is in clover no nonsense upsets (6)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1588



Prizewinners to 1588

Dominic Aissa (London SW10)
Miss Patricia White (Birmingham)
C.W. Thomas (Bristol)

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Printed by BPCC Colchester Web Offset Ltd, Sheepen Place, Colchester CO3 3LJ (Tel. 577881), a member company of BPCC Printing Corporation plc.
Published by The Statesman & Nation Publishing Co. Ltd at Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ.

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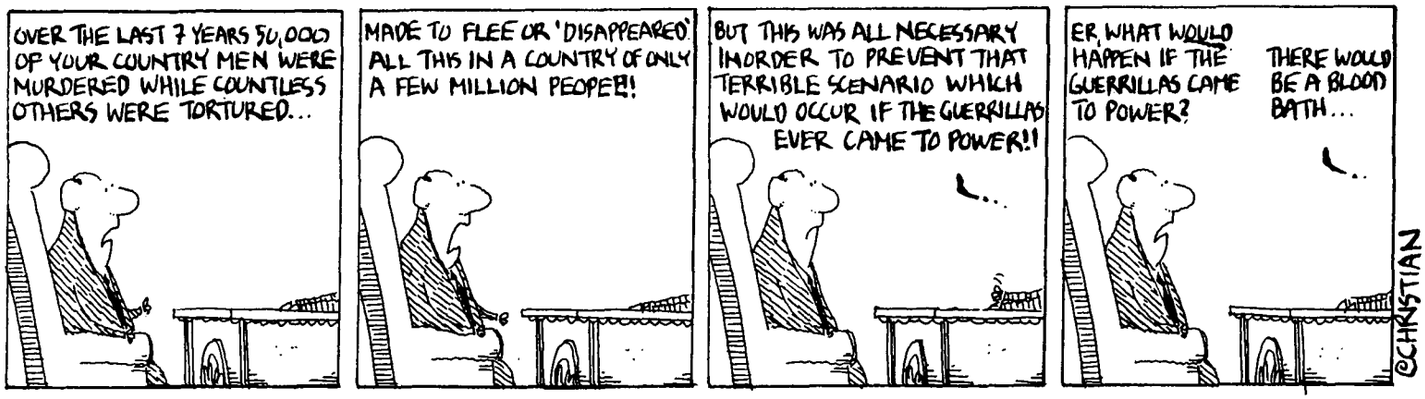
OVER THE LAST 7 YEARS 50,000 OF YOUR COUNTRY MEN WERE MURDERED WHILE COUNTLESS OTHERS WERE TORTURED...
MADE TO FLEE OR 'DISAPPEARED' ALL THIS IN A COUNTRY OF ONLY A FEW MILLION PEOPLE?!
BUT THIS WAS ALL NECESSARY IN ORDER TO PREVENT THAT TERRIBLE SCENARIO WHICH WOULD OCCUR IF THE GUERRILLAS EVER CAME TO POWER!!
ER, WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE GUERRILLAS CAME TO POWER?
THERE WOULD BE A BLOOD BATH...
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Chess

THE DARK BLUES had a really bad time when I was on their team — not so much a winter of discontent, more an Ice Age in which the cooler blue of Cambridge racked up 11 consecutive wins. In the 80s the other foot has been putting the boot in and Oxford's 4½-3½ win in this year's varsity match was our eighth in a row. That makes the grand total since 1873 (not counting drawn matches and the war years) just 45-44 in Cambridge's favour. And I bet we'll level scores next year when we can call on IMs James Howell (back from his intercalary year) and David Norwood (going up to read history at Keble).

Actually, the 1988 varsity sides were rather weak — at least that's what the ratings say. But some of the games were good and this one, played on board 3, was outstanding:

Watts (Cambridge)-Hazelton (Oxford). Sicilian, Sveshnikov Variation.
1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 e5 6. Ndb5 d6 7. Bg5 a6 8. Na3 b5 9. Bxf6 gxf6 10. Nd5 f5 11. Bd3 Be6 12. Qh5 Bg7 12 . . . f4, as in game 3 of the Short-Sax candidates' match, seems to me to be Black's best bet. **13. 0-0 f4 14. Nb1!?** In Short-Sax game 1 Nigel chose 14. c4 and made it look strong. But is Watts' move inferior? **0-0 15. Nd2 Ne7 16. g4 Re8 17. a4 Nxd5 18. exd5 Bxd5 19. axb5?** Here White misses his way by pursuing a pawn at the cost of position. 19. Be4! is thematic and promising. The rest of the game shows how sour things can turn for White in this variation if he loses control of the light squares, above all d5 and e4. **axb5 20. Qxh7+ Kf8 21. Bxb5 Re6 22. Qd3 Bb7 23. f3 Qb6+ 24. Kg2 Rxa1 25. Rxa1 d5! 26. c4 e4! 27. Qa3+ Kg8 28. cxd5 exf3+ 29. Nxf3 Bxd5 30. Qa5 Bxf3+ 31. Kxf3 Qe3+ 32. Kg2 Qe4+ 33. Kh3 Rh6 mate.**

However, my favourite chess match isn't Oxford v Cambridge, or even Alekhine v Capablanca, Spassky v Fischer, USSR v RoW, or Kasparov v Karpov. The pairing Knight v Bishop surpasses any of these. In general the Bishop is ahead of his arch-enemy by rather more than Cambridge and Kasparov. But we know how a Knight can trample on a Bishop fallen so far from grace as to become "bad".

A more obscure issue is: when can two Knights hope to compete with two Bishops? Since the badness of a Bishop is a matter of its own pawns standing on its colour, two Bishops can't both be bad except in very odd positions. One would expect the Knights to be in trouble, unless they could use block pawn-chains as a hedge and shield. But as **Psakhis-Speelman Hastings 1987/8** (*Diagram A*) shows, there are exceptions. In the early middlegame the side with cavalry often enjoys an advantage in time, for the simple reason that from the initial position it takes less *tempi* to capture Knights with Bishops than *vice versa*. Here Speelman has put the time to good centralising use, which has obliged Psakhis to hide one of his Bs on e1 as a way of keeping the pair intact. Play continued: **20 . . . Ndb4 21. a3 Na2!** It took remarkable foresight to see that a return ticket was issued for this journey! **22. Rc4 Nd4** The first point is that if now 23. Ra1 Nb3! 24. Rxa2 Rd1!. **23. b3 Nb5 24. Rb2 Nac3!** It becomes increasingly clear that the K on f1 is a tactical weakness, e.g. 25. Bxc3 Nxc3 26. Rxc3 Rd1 mate or 25. Rxc3 Nxc3 26. Bxc3 Rd1+ 27. Be1 Ra1 and White must lose both a- and b-pawns if he is to save the Be1. **25. a4 Nd1 26. Rb1!** I think giving up the exchange is better than 26. Ra2 Nd4, but it's debatable. **Na3 27. Rcc1 Nxb1 28. Rxb1 f5! 29. Bb7 g5 30. Ba6 f4 31. Bd3?** For all Speelman's ingenuity, it's doubtful whether he could have made any progress if the B had marked time between b5 and c4. **Rxd3 32. exd3 Rxd3 33. Ke2 Rd5 34. gxf4 gxf4** The main points here are: 35. Rxd1? f3+ and 35. Bd2 Nxf2! White is short of moves he can safely play. **35. Rc1 Nb2 36. Bc3 Nd3** The *zwischenzug* is still here: 37. Rd1 Nb4 38. Bxb4? f3+!. But I'm not sure Black can win in this variation after 38. Rxd5 Nxd5 39. Be5, whether he goes to f5 or c6 with the K. **37. Rg1 Nb4 38. Rg7+?** A blunder. Whatever you think about the Rook ending after 38. Bxb4 cxb4, it's clear that Black would still have some work left to do. **Kf8 39. Bb2 Rd3 0-1.**

While we're on the subject of black horses, I must record that the finals of the 1987-8 **Lloyds Bank British Solving Championship** resulted in a third successive victory for Jonathan Mestel. *Diagram B* is a position that stumped 11 of the 17 finalists. But it's not too difficult, is it? For a fair comparison with the contestants you have to find the solution (White mates in two against any defence) inside 6 minutes. Also, you have to feel nervous — it was the first position in the test.

Diagram A: Psakhis-Speelman

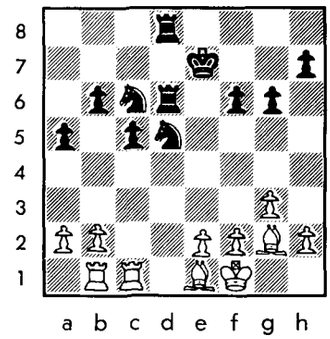
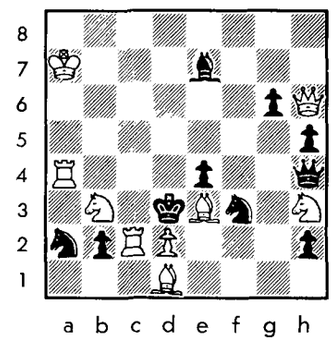


Diagram B: Mate in 2



George Botterill

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Tel: 01-739 3211 (Editorial & Administration)
Telex: 28449/Cables: Newstat, London E2/Fax 01-739 9307
© 1988 Statesman & Nation Publishing Co Ltd & contributors
Published by The Statesman & Nation Publishing Co Ltd
Distributed by NS Distribution

Editor: Stuart Weir; **Deputy Editor:** John Rentoul; **Books & Arts Editor:** Harriett Gilbert; **Writers:** Sarah Benton, Duncan Campbell, Jane Dibblin (Upfront), Rob Edwards (Scotland), Jolyon Jenkins; **Deputy Books & Arts Editor:** Malcolm Imrie; **Poetry Editor:** Hugo Williams; **Production Manager:** Joanne Hurst; **Art Editor:** Vicky Hutchings; **Sub-editors:** Susan Ardill, Christine Orton; **Editorial Assistant:** Jane Thomas

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Second class postage paid at New York, NY USPS 382260. Air freight in US by Speedimpex USA Inc. (US Postmaster: Address changes should be sent to New Statesman, Speedimpex USA Inc., 45-45 39th Street, Long Island City, NY 11104)

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This England

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☐ A London magistrate was puzzled yesterday by the term "personal organiser". Mr Eric Crowther said at Horseferry Road Court, "The only thing I can imagine it to be is a wife." —*Daily Telegraph* (Chris McLean)

☐ He first gained publicity for his unorthodox sentencing policy after giving one local man charged with being drunk and disorderly four weeks to write an essay on the topic of Dalriada, the Ancient Land of Dumbarton.— *Daily Telegraph* (Derek Morgan)

☐ Gone are the days when a watch was purely a functional and expensive item. Lower manufacturing costs and imaginative design mean that it is now regarded as an essential fashion accessory, of which most people own two, if not three or four. — *Guardian* (Michael Rubinstein)

☐ The perfect civil servant should think like Winnie the Pooh, write like Confucius and study Apponius before sending a memo, according to the Cabinet Office. — *Daily Telegraph* (Brenda Rowe)

☐ A pensioner was given just a sheet when she was admitted to Charing Cross hospital. She was freezing — but when she asked nurses for a blanket they told her the hospital is so hard up that there aren't enough to go round. So she had to shiver until a visitor went out and bought her one. — *Daily Mirror* (George Moor)

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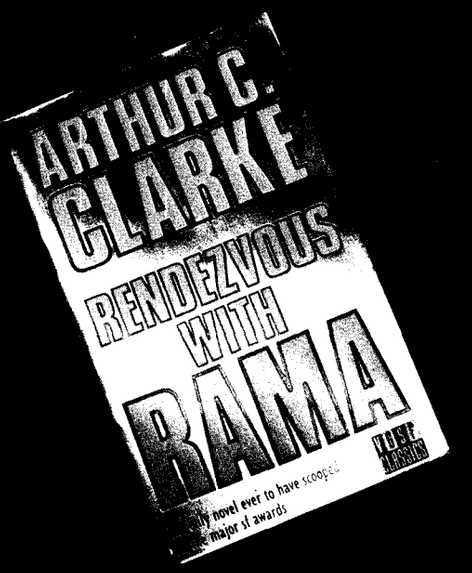
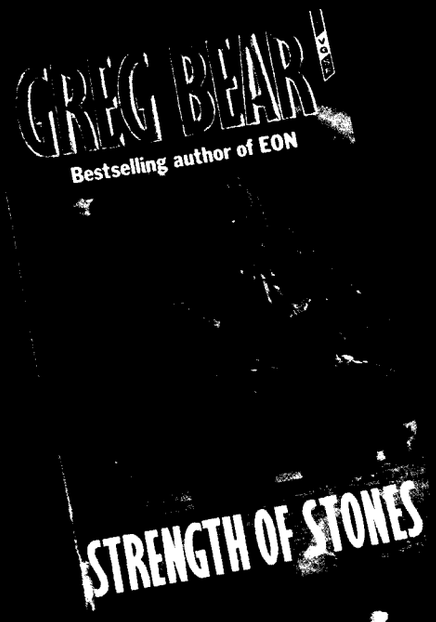
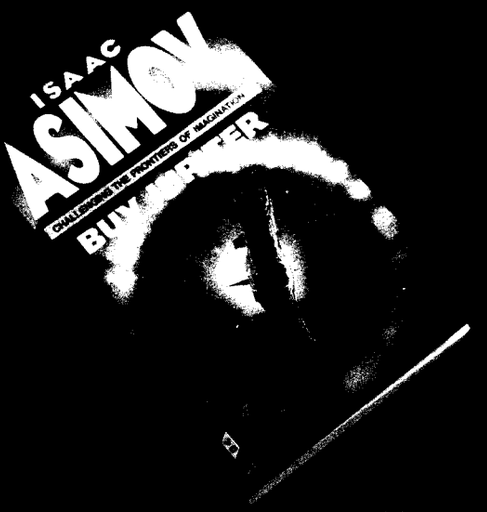
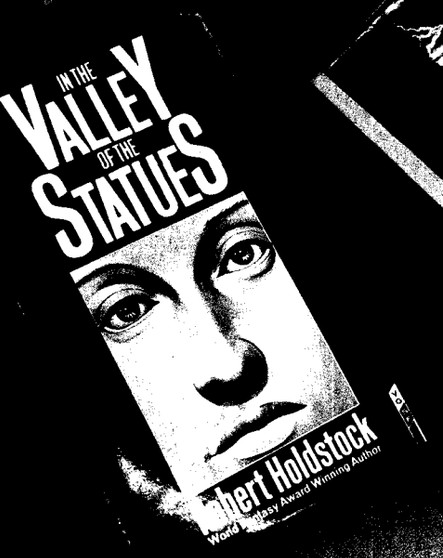
Q

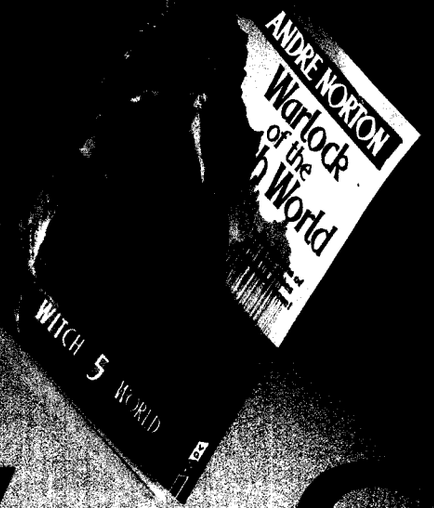
When that spaceship is [illegible] RAMA – incomprehensible, impossible to divert from its chosen course, and totally oblivious of all attempts at communication. Sounds familiar. But unlike the Prime Minister, RAMA came from light years away and was only passing through the Solar System for a few months – read about it in **Arthur C. Clarke's** prize-winning RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA.











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